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Clergy Sexual Misconduct

A Systems Perspective

Edited by
Nancy Myer Hopkins



Resources for people who care about congregations.

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Introduction

Nancy Myer Hopkins, M.S., LPC, Editor

The writings in this collection have been chosen to help address the issue of clergy sexual misconduct from a systems perspective. It is all too easy for a person who is trying to manage a single aspect of this complex process to forget that there are others who are also profoundly affected. The management of one of these cases is a very intense and often daunting experience; it helps to have knowledge of all the elements, and to develop a team approach which will be able to hold in tension the needs of everyone involved. This strategy will help avert costly mistakes, and assure that all parties will be treated fairly.

Fair treatment does not mean, however, that all pain will be avoided in the process of opening the case up. Because the behavior of the offending clergyman results in tremendous pain, that pain will spread as the truth-telling radiates throughout the system. This is inevitable; it is well to keep in mind that all subsequent events that cause people pain are due to the original behavior, NOT by the victim coming forward, or by church leaders telling people what happened. A healing of the spirit for all parties can be the ultimate outcome of having an open process, yet healing requires working through the pain, not around it.

The first article in the collection is by Celia Allison Hahn, Inhabiting our Longing. This is a nice general discussion of the spiritual dimensions of sexual desire and longing. Hahn believes that the church must not over-react to sexual misconduct by either splitting off and denying our erotic nature, or by responding by over-controlling with rigid rules and regulations intended to address every possible permutation of male-female behavior in a congregational setting.

Hahn describes some helpful ways groups are dealing openly with the issues and provides additional suggested reading. She acknowledges some basic gender differences in approaches to sexuality, saying, "We can support women so they don't seek validation through a relationship with a man. We could support men so they don't take their erotic, spiritual, and working lives apart in a way that deadens them and disappoints the women who want to love them." I think that acknowledgement of gender differences is a good first step, especially if women and men define their own realities; yet the deeper and more intractable gender power imbalances also demand our attention. If there is a root cause for sexual abuse and exploitation in the church, with 96% of the victims being women and children, gender power imbalance, especially as it plays out in the church, must be considered a primary factor.

A companion piece to Hahn's article is Donald Hand's The Role of Shame. The phrase that jumped out at me is, "Shame's partner is

secrecy". Knowing how the impulse to maintain secrets works throughout the system, this seems like a particularly apt phrase. Hands takes a helpful look at the role of shame and guilt in clergy sexual misconduct. Some of the common and unhealthy responses to sexuality are: repression - not acknowledging one's sexuality, Suppression - relying on one's will to control sexual thoughts, feelings and impulses which "leads to pre-occupation which leads to obsession which leads eventually to gratification." This is a summary of the addictive process which is driven by shame. Hands dismisses sublimation, the psychoanalytical (and often the church's) favorite remedy, as being one which reduces the life of the spirit to the life of the physical body.

Integration is "...the only appropriate response that is available, productive, practical and growthful... when sexuality is itself shamed, expect trouble, when intimacy, the experience of emotionally close friendship is shamed, expect trouble, when spiritually is presented as angelic and non-incarnational, expect trouble".

Both Hahn and Hands raise concerns about the emerging profiles of many clergy indicating that a disproportionate number may come from shame-based families of origin where true intimacy was in short supply. When offenders in recovery tell their stories, they often say that they were depending, in vain, on ordination to magically remove their shame. The role of sexual shame in many religious homes and why people from those homes seem attracted to the ordained ministry are topics that need much more research.

In the area of prevention, we have the article by Sparks, Ray and Houts, Sexual Misconduct in Ministry: What Clergy At Risk Are Doing About It. The University of Wisconsin at Madison produced one of the earliest educational programs, including a video. This was designed to help clergy become aware of the issues, and to examine their own behavior. A follow-up survey of over 400 clergy is the subject of this article. The discussion of the findings about the 20% of the total who judged themselves to be at risk is fascinating. A particularly intriguing finding is that while 76% of those who felt themselves to be at risk reported that they were changing their ministry practices, only 30% of that same group reported that they were changing their personal lives. The authors ask, "How can you change practices in ministry without also addressing the personal side of life, such as family, friends, and others in one's social network?"

Even more disturbing, the author state that only one of fifty-nine in the at-risk group mentioned paying attention to spouse and family. Here we find hard evidence that the issues of intimacy and integration do matter. Helping clergy understand boundaries across a broad continuum of their lives seems to be of crucial importance. The article by Thomas Harries, The Cell Wall: A Metaphor For Good Boundaries would be an excellent discussion starter for clergy groups, as well as for clergy and laity to

consider together. If the clergy are going to change their behavior not only in their practice of ministry but also in a way that will give them more time for themselves and with their families, the laity need to understand why that is necessary. It is also important that judicatory officials lead the way, both by personal example and by assisting with the educational effort.

Brubaker's article, ...In Cases of CLergy Sexual Abuse or Misconduct, gives a helpful overview of the issues encountered and the response of the church. I would add a few suggestions, based on my experience as a researcher and consultant in this field. It is vital that there be two people, a man and a woman, doing the work with the congregation. Having the perspective of both sexes is important, because men and women respond differently when encountering the profound and often painful truths they must during the process of opening things up. Sometimes people can only hear things they need to from a person of the same sex. In addition, often people get in touch with their own sexual abuse issues, perhaps only half-remembered, and they need a person on hand to respond immediately. Usually that person must not be of the sex of the one who abused them. The only way I know to model wholeness in such settings is to have both sexes represented in leadership roles. It is possible for one trained and paid external consultant to train a carefully chosen local person such as an interim or a judicatory staff person to fill that role, thus keeping costs down.

There are also increasing concerns about how to care for the family of the offender. The spouse is frequently highly defended, and if not told the full truth about the behavior, will often stay in denial longer than she might otherwise, remaining very angry at the wrong people. She also may well be justifiably frightened, knowing that the security of the family is severely threatened. If the family was in church-owned housing, the loss of a home will loom large. If the spouse is not told the truth by her husband, and she wishes to remain in the community, she is in danger of being "blind-sided", especially if the truth is told to the congregation, as it needs to be, in order for them to heal.

It is not clear whose responsibility it is to make sure the spouse knows at least as much as the congregation does. Ideally, she will hear the truth from her husband, who will have gone willingly into treatment, and part of that treatment will include work with family members. Here again, Hand's phrase, "shame's partner is secrecy" seems to fit.

Nils Friberg's article, A Denominational Survival Kit For Afterpastors targets another part of the system. An afterpastor is one who has followed an offending clergyperson; the effect of the offender's behavior and the manner of his leave-taking can be so traumatic as to negatively impact congregational life for years afterwards. This is especially true if the truth was not told and openly dealt with by everyone at the time of the removal. Fortunately, fewer and fewer pastors are put into such

situations now without being fully aware of the situation. We have heard many pain-filled stories of clergy who have had it gradually dawn on them that something was very wrong in their congregations. They found themselves in intolerable situations because of the lack of trust at all levels of congregational life, but most especially they found that lack of trust along with much displaced anger was directed at them.

Included in this collection are two single page educational pieces which can be duplicated and used as handouts either during training or in a congregational setting. Chilton Knudsen's piece, Dimensions Of Congregational Healing, helps in understanding the grief process, and is especially useful for giving people permission to be wherever they are, yet encouraging them to give others the space to be in a different place. Talking about feelings in small groups is an important task for all involved at various points along the way; this diagram is probably best used after that happens, and should help to explain and validate everyone's feelings.

The Hopkins piece, The Congregation Is also a Victim: Sexual Abuse And The Betrayal Of Pastoral Trust is a summary of the paper by the same title, available as a paper on demand from Alban. This handout seems to be particularly helpful with boards of lay leaders such as vestries, or when used in training events.

The two articles from anonymous authors who are recovering perpetrators are compelling, and they illustrate what recovery really looks like. Because true recovery is extremely hard work and relatively rare, these articles give this collection a large measure of hope.

The article by Margo Maris and Nancy Hopkins, The Victim/Survivor, is an overview of needs of the victims, and the role of the victim's advocates.

The final article in this collection, by Harold Hopkins, is Primary Elements in a 'Systems approach' To Prevention And Response To Clergy Sexual Misbehavior. This document reinforces and sums up all the other readings, and will be especially helpful for denominational leaders in insuring that all necessary elements are being covered.

Also included is a reading and resource list. Fortunately, there are now some good resources available, with more coming all the time. The collective action of the church, happening as it has across denominational lines, in learning how to deal responsibly and justly is perhaps the greatest sign of hope.

Inhabiting our Longing

A faithful response to the church's concerns about sexual misbehavior

by Celia Allison Hahn

Concerns about clergy sexual abuse of power are commanding anxious attention among church people. Two recent conversations on the subject have helped me to clarify approaches to those concerns that don't help (and may even compound the trouble) and other approaches that offer hope for honesty and healing, for discovering faithful and fruitful ways of living as passionate and responsible people.

But moving toward those hopes requires a new perspective. Rules are not enough. Sanctions do not address the real issue—the issue of longing. If we could get friendly with the possibility that we might simply inhabit our longing, we might take a different approach to sexual misconduct in the church. Just as we have learned to examine the inner turmoil that fuels misdeeds in other areas of abuse, we must attend not only to the necessary sanctions but also to the yearning deep in our hearts from which we might reach out faithfully, as well as hurtfully.

The Inadequacy of Damage Control

On Tuesday a clergywoman from New Zealand told me of a case in which several women reported that they had been seduced by a clergyman who held a powerful and particularly sensitive role. The church was slow to respond, and the clergyman was allowed to resign quietly, apparently because an important ecclesiastical project might be jeopardized by the exposure of this scandal. The church system then drew up a new set of behavior guidelines for clergy. There was no direct response to the women, who found themselves left on the sidelines, in pain.

I have every sympathy for church executives suddenly faced with the responsibility for controlling the damage when these incidents of clergy sexual abuse emerge from under the rug where they have been swept until recently. Clearly these bishops and other leaders are left with an ugly, thankless, and expensive task.

But damage control alone does not restore wholeness or instill hope for the future. Troops and riot control procedures were essential following the Los Angeles riots, but they do little to fulfil residents' hopes for the future wholeness of the city. Similarly, how might we in the church move beyond damage control to incarnate our hopes for the wholeness of a church made up of men and women who struggle to hold body and soul together in loving faithfulness to God?

As I listened to my visitor's distressed account, it struck me that the church hierarchy often responds to sexual misconduct out of two basic impulses; unfortunately, both fail to reach toward our larger hopes for wholeness.

At the moment of crisis, the first impulse is to reestablish *control*. This is why our churches are churning out new standards for clergy conduct. I have heard of one judicatory whose anxious—and even absurd—response was quite revealing: specific instructions for what kinds of hugs clergy could give people, specifying correct body positions in detail—the *most* professionally correct being side by side with an arm around the other's shoulder.

The second impulse is to split off and deny the existence of our erotic nature. Of course, this requires the rejection of women who are often seen as the personification of eros. (If *he* is aroused; *she* is a temptress.) The goal is to edge sex out of the church; it doesn't belong there. These assumptions are often combined in the titillated judgmentalism that provides a source of hearty amusement to secular people and is never found in those who wholeheartedly inhabit either their human or ethical passion.

These two impulses—one based on control and the other on denial—do not lead to healthy or helpful solutions for the individuals involved or for the church at large. In fact it could be argued that this obsession with control and denial helped cause the trouble in the first place.

While the church doesn't *intend* to make unhelpful responses, averting the gaze or shaking the finger constitute a kindergarten approach to the graduate-level dilemmas about sexuality now confronting the church. These responses do not begin to touch the true nature of our pain and our longing. They leave us well fortified against love, which demands that we become vulnerable, but which also promises truth and life instead of denial and deadness

Stumbling Toward Trust

The second set of conversations I had last week—very different from that talk with the New Zealand clergywomen—happened at a UCC clergy conference in Connecticut. We spent a day together in stumbling but open willingness to examine our struggles as men and women. We sought to reach first toward honesty and then toward trust, in hope that our dilemmas might be touched by grace. Our task was to address three sets of questions: *Partnership*—What makes it hard to be a partner in ministry with a man or woman? *Intimacy*—What are our longings, our puzzlements, and our convictions about intimacy in a church setting? and *Attraction*—How can we be true to our own inner longings and our need to behave responsibly?

First we explored *partnership*.

In separate groups of men and women, we talked about barriers to partnership. With great difficulty, the women began. Some were in such pain that to speak openly, even in this safe forum, seemed an enormous risk. But after an apprehensive start, women described their experiences.

"I speak and I am not heard, and I fall back, disempowered and discouraged."

"I need to share human kinds of things with him,

but it's hard if he's bossy,

or if he acts like my father,

or when his attitude is 'all business,'
or when he tells locker room jokes,
or when his attitude is 'We'll let *you* carry the feelings around here.'"
One woman added, "But when he responds, I feel a sense of promise."
But men too expressed pain about partnership. They said:

"I withdraw from controlling women. I will not be grasped to death."

"My relationships with women often come out of a wounded place: somehow I get reminded of my mother, and it's confusing."

"I don't know how to differentiate between intimacy and sex. So I get *caught* in intimacy with women."

"But sometimes I am more comfortable telling important things to a woman than a man."

The comments of the men and women mirrored those I have heard in so many groups; men distance themselves in spite of their longings, while women hunger for connection, and then take any rejection personally, into their deepest being. Each sex's major strength becomes a source of wounding: men are hurt in their separating, women in their connecting. And both find themselves hurting one another.

Next we spoke about *intimacy*. Sherry and Mark, longtime friends and colleagues in church enterprises, started us out with a dialogue addressing two questions: "What longings for intimacy do men and women bring to a partnership?" and "What puzzles us about the other sex's approach to intimacy?"

Sherry: I once believed that intimate relationships between men and women were common. Intimacy is such a gift; it's too important to forego. Several times when I have approached a man with whom I thought intimacy was a possibility, he walked right out the door. Don't men think intimacy is important?

Mark: It's not that it's *not* important. It's *too* important. It scares the hell out of us. For men, the bridge to women is sex, hoping it will grow to love. Women love, then they want to express it in sex. But men don't know how to get to love without sex.

Sherry: If the relationship is important, there should be a willingness to struggle with what is not easy.

Mark: Men have fears. We are wounded. A lot of the reasons for our behavior are quite unconscious. Men are very sad. And we don't know why.

Sometimes you make it safe for me to deal with those questions, because you don't beat up on me. How much man-bashing there is! I know that a lot of things are wrong and I know what some of them are. But how many beatings am I going to get?

Women talk to other women. Men go to a bar, and tell it to the bartender. We reach out to others "in pieces." A little bit here, a little bit there. We're afraid we're going to be made to feel inadequate if we let it all out in one place. I am longing for a blessing. I longed for a blessing from my father, but...

Sherry: My father was critical, too, but I was a daughter, not a son. I'm wounded, raw, too vulnerable. I want to say, "Please, see my vulnerability and go gently." I'm afraid a man will take advantage of my woundedness.

Mark: I'm less wounded now. And more aware. That's partly because women like you have been present to me, helping me become more aware.

Sherry: We need chances to talk about intimacy and attraction in safe and neutral groups.

The group pursued some of the yearnings and anxieties about intimacy raised by Sherry and Mark, and then moved on to talk about how we might faithfully deal with attraction—that energy-filled encounter when we find ourselves pursued by the thought, "I want to take her to bed" or "I have fallen in love with him."

As the UCC clergy and I looked at the truth about what hurt us and what we longed for, some trust came, and we moved toward healing. As we looked at our yearnings for intimacy and examined our impulses to respond to them in faithless ways, there came what one person called a "grace-filled moment about 'inhabiting the longing.'" Others also reflected that the important insight had been that "living with the longing—not getting what I want and living in the emptiness—leaves room for God."

In the Pause Between Desire and Fulfillment

After years of struggle and reflection on such energy-filled encounters I know two things: I want to be aware of the reality of my own experience, and I want to behave responsibly.

First, I need to know my own feelings before I can make any decisions. Lack of self-awareness can make us mean. (I have many times heard a clergywoman say that when the senior pastor became attracted to her, she suddenly became the enemy.)

But my recognition of desire does not grant me permission to express it; I must resist the temptation to act out inappropriately, to abandon my marital and vocational commitments. Standing in this basic tension is not easy, but if I am willing to bear the discomfort, I can receive gifts from this challenge which fell, all invited, into my life.

Falling in love is one of the ways heaven tries to break into our hearts. Frederick Buechner tells how his first boyhood love pointed toward "all the beauty I longed for beyond the beauty I longed for in her." The painful delight of such encounters opens me up to longings that cannot be met by the one who occasions the opening.

And here we move beyond the basic human issue into a spiritual challenge. When I lean too hard on someone I can't ultimately depend on, I have found that the props always get knocked out from under me. I want to make this love "the whole loaf," but I am finally pressed toward the truth about my misplaced longing. Over the years I have discovered to my joy that it is really God who seeks to give me—and all of us—"the whole loaf," and that lots of little pieces of bread get handed out in church all the time, in the communion of warm hearts as well as the communion we receive in the form of bread and wine.

If I know that I am “longing for a blessing,” I might decide to enter that longing and consent to dwell in it, rather than denying it or seeking to fill that aching void with a love that’s too small. God gives every one of us a longing that God, loving us passionately, longs to fill. But instead we stuff things into that aching void so we don’t have to feel the pain of it, because we don’t really believe God will fill it.

Isn’t “the love of God” a nice idea? A moral value? A pious hope, perhaps reserved for the dead? Sometimes it seems as though the love of God is the best kept, yet most constantly-talked-about secret in our churches! Perhaps the experiences that expose our longing are true gifts. They invite us, instead of controlling, to be utterly vulnerable. They call us, instead of denying and anaesthetizing, to be wide awake and fully aware, to face reality.

Life’s lessons continue to show us that all the things we *thought* might fill the void don’t work. Not straight-A children, or becoming president of the company, or being admired by the right people, or a six-figure salary, or a seemingly irresistible sexual encounter. And life also teaches us that all the things we do to pretend we aren’t hungry won’t work either. Not television, or alcohol, or looking for something to want wandering through shopping malls, or sex at the tired edges of the day. And at the end of those lists idol and anaesthesia are revealed as one and the same: when people act out their emotions sexually in a mindless way, they are more likely to be running from their feelings than assertively acting on them.

The Promise of Longing

Here I propose a truly counter-cultural posture for the church! Perhaps the secular culture’s focus on sex represents a clouded hunch that our longings are somehow the key. If this is so, we can most helpfully respond not by shouting “No” but by offering an alternative that is more loving, gentle, and open, that is true to our calling, and that is full of promise. If we could inhabit our longing and be open to having it filled, we might live differently. We might simply bring our longing to God.

When we deny or bury our desire, God can’t find a way into our longing. If we sit simply and vulnerably in our longing and ask God to fill the void, we may receive the most precious gift of all, a gift described by one lover of God as the ... “living flame of love

That tenderly wounds my soul
In its deepest center!”

If we sought to stimulate conversations about inhabiting the longing in our congregations, we might discover some practical and faithful approaches. For instance, a group might discuss and practice Gerald May’s *The Awakened Heart* (Harper San Francisco, 1991)—the best guide I know to the spiritual practice of living in the longing. We could leave a few spaces in our worship where we could begin to become aware of our hunger. We could pay special attention to the life experiences that uncover our longings. We could support women so that they don’t seek validation through a relationship with a man. We could support men so that they don’t take their erotic, spiritual, and working lives apart in a way that deadens them and disappoints the women who want to love them. Some men and women who want to work

on those issues are gathering in local churches to read and discuss my book, *Sexual Paradox: Creative Tensions in Our Lives and In Our Congregations* (The Pilgrim Press, 1991), which explores how we may approach our life in the church without slighting women or bashing men. We are all seeking healing for the hurt and sustenance for our hunger, and attending to that search is a major task of the church.

For twenty years I have heard the stories and read the unpublished case studies of clergy who have engaged in inappropriate sexual relations with parishioners. Now that we are acknowledging those instances of clergy sexual acting out instead of persisting in denial and avoidance, we can start holding open conversations about how to hit the mark so many are missing.

Not every pastor is drawn to the path of passion. But many do enter the ministry because of their longing for love. We know that ministry often beckons people who care deeply about intimacy and transformation. And I have a hunch that it is those passionate pastors who are at particular risk for temptations to pursue their longings in inappropriate and ultimately hurtful ways. To them is issued a particular call to sojourn faithfully in their longing, to seek first to center themselves in their yearning for God, take time for vulnerable, open, receiving forms of prayer, and balance the many strenuous hours they spend in caregiving with daily opportunities to receive care themselves.

Clergy need opportunities (like the UCC clergy conference) to work through their struggles with partnership between men and women, with hunger for intimacy, and with sexual attraction. They need models for honest and responsible pastoral relationships like those described by Dorothy McRae-McMahon in *Being Clergy, Staying Human: Taking Our Stand In The River* (The Alban Institute, 1992):

As I sit with people, I do not simply sit there as a mind, soul, and heart. I am also a sexual body, a whole person present. As I enter into intimate relationships with people, often with those who are not engaged in fulfilling intimate relationships of their own, I may become aware of sexual feelings running between us...

I find that people are relieved when feelings are named in a comfortable way and are usually released from hopes and fantasies...In saying all this, I am recognizing that the main issue for most clergy is not about avoiding compromising situations...; it is about being impeccably responsible at each point in the relationship...

As we seek to hold eros and spirit together in our churches in ways like those I have just described, we may find new life breathed into the dried ethical remnants that are all we have left when we have turned away from God's passionate love and denied the reality of our experience. As church people move beyond nervous avoidance of our sexual pain and joy, the Christian community can tap into a God-given center of energy that will make our churches more alive, more human, more creative, more passionate, more loving—and more deeply responsible.

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The role of shame in clergy sexual misconduct:
Toward Liberation from Shamed Sexuality

by Donald R. Hands

In recent times incidents and public awareness of pastoral sexual misconduct have dramatically risen. One leading church insurance company states that from 1980 to 1984 there was only one case of pastoral misconduct handled. From 1984 to the present there have been over 400. It is noteworthy that so far four states have legislated against pastoral sexual misconduct in cases of sexual contact between pastors and members of their parishes. These legislatures have added clergy to the list of professionals, like physicians and psychologists, who are both ethically and now criminally prohibited from sexual activity with their patients or parishioners. These are serious crimes—felonies with stiff penalties. This is a noteworthy phenomenon because the states and not the churches have put it in the public domain, shedding light on what had been, unfortunately, a matter of ecclesiastical shame and secrecy. Too often in the past church leaders have covered up and handled such incidents inappropriately. They failed to provide treatment for the victims of pastoral sexual misconduct and to discipline and treat the clergy-perpetrators themselves. They have neglected to inform future congregational leadership of the pastor's misconduct and have simply permitted such pastors to continue in the active ordained ministry.

I write within the perspective of an ecumenical mental health and addictions hospital and treatment center for clergy and vowed religious. There have been several such treatment centers developed in the past twenty years. The collective experience of these centers validates that clergy and vowed religious are a specialized population. Overwhelmingly, pastoral sexual misconduct is perpetrated by ordained and vowed men, and only by a small percentage of ordained women. No incidents have been reported by vowed women. These pastors are highly intellectual and out of touch with their affective life. They have a significantly greater experience of shame, and their mind-games or denial systems are both highly sophisticated and resistant to penetration.

Over the past decade there has been a growing understanding and appreciation of the role of *shame* in determining human behavior. Both from the fields of addiction and mental health much has been written describing the deleterious effects of shame on the lives of individuals and family systems. One of the finest is a phenomenological analysis of the lived-experience of shame by Gershen Kaufman. He describes the self's experience of shame as follows: First, a person painfully undergoes a break in the interpersonal bond used to connect him with the shaming other. Shame always has origins in early interpersonal relationships which later in life are reflexively internalized such that the shame-response becomes near automatic. It is a learned response, somewhat in the mode of classical conditioning.

Secondly, there is the experience of feeling one's very selfhood diminished and one's self-esteem vandalized. Shame is a more primitive experience than guilt. Guilt can be

experienced when a person violates a rule or breaks a law. Guilt is healthy and, if it is operating simply and therapeutically, a person simply gets back on track and goes on with life without an undue amount of shaming self-punishment and condemnation. However, the experience of shame hits people more at the core of their being so that they themselves feel themselves inadequate and defective. It is the experience of being-a-failure as opposed to having failed this or that. Shame becomes a person's constant companion, ever scolding, putting-down and raging against the self.

The third phenomenological aspect of shame, according to Kaufman, is the fear of exposure or publicity. Shame's partner is secrecy. When a person feels, in his core, defective and diminished it would be quite natural to want to keep this condition quiet. Fear of rejection and abandonment, learned in the past, is projected into the present and future. Not telling one's story, not disclosing feelings to the light of communication become normative. Fear of exposure plummets a person in a downward spiral of continuing and cumulative self-condemnation.

One of the major difficulties in these areas of pastoral sexual misconduct and its corollary, shame, is the lack of a model for positive, healthy, and holy expressions of sexuality. It is clear, however, that "appropriate" sexual behavior is a matter of ideology not of science. Values and religious traditions are certainly involved. What this article proposes to outline are five approaches or stances which an individual can take toward sexuality and its expression. The fifth stance, namely INTEGRATION, is offered as the only one appropriate, healthy and life-giving. It is hoped that it will provide a direction for a healthy and holy model of sexual experience and expression.

The first human possibility and stance in regard to sexuality is REPRESSION. This is to pretend that one is simply not sexual at all. It is to try to live an asexual existence. This may be a defense against the deeper anxiety and danger attributed to sexuality. This is, of course, the foundation of Freudian theory. Harry Stack Sullivan describes REPRESSION in terms of "primary genital phobia," a condition wherein sexual thoughts, feelings, and impulses are immediately and almost reflexively ignored. As Sullivan phrases it, a person so afflicted lives as though the area between his navel and his knees simply does not exist and becomes "not-me." Early experiences of being shamed by parents and significant others for exploring one's body and genitals, and later for having sexual thoughts or feelings lead to REPRESSION.

Some religious traditions with a dualistic or puritanical philosophy, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have engendered and fostered such a distorted stance. If sexual thoughts, feelings, and impulses are automatically evil and base, then the appropriate response is to turn them off. To so bury such intrusions and invasions as from the Enemy or Evil One becomes habitual and automatic so that one eventually loses contact with the sexual aspects of human existence. In such religious traditions, training, and formation, persons become so adept at turning off sexual thoughts, feelings and impulses as proximate occasions of sin (and therefore extremely dangerous to salvation and safety) that they pretend to live absolutely without even attending to sexuality. Some clergy and religious in mid-life have so shut off this aspect of their basic existence that they are not even aware of their sexual

orientation as heterosexual or homosexual. Of course, one cannot live without suffering some serious psychological difficulty by repressing sexuality and pretending that this core aspect of one's being does not exist. REPRESSION as a stance toward sexuality or as a solution to what to do in the face of sexuality is a self-defeating failure.

A closely related stance towards one's sexuality is that of capitalized SUPPRESSION. Here, a person actively and consciously struggles against sexual feelings, thoughts and impulses. In this stance a person remains vigilant, guarded, and in active combat, using willpower as his or her major weapon against the intrusion and invasion of sexual imaginings. The imagery of battle and warfare come to mind. We hear of "white knuckling" or taking cold baths or showers to arrest, stifle and terminate sexual impulses. The situation may be framed, as some medieval Christian writers suggested, as a *psychomachia*, a combat within the soul between good and evil spirits. When one discovers or finds himself in a state of heightened sexual arousal, he must engage the enemy head-on, fight to conquer and be victorious. SUPPRESSION is often mis-used as the major tool against impulses toward masturbation. The fallacy, of course, in such a stance is that, by directly engaging one's will, imagination, and intellect against the impulse to masturbate, one is continually preoccupied with the matter of masturbation. This becomes eventually an obsession, an unwelcome thought that simply does not go away. Sexual desires and impulses like masturbation are stronger than our will-power alone and usually win the day over preoccupation and the direct assaults of this stance. Clearly then, SUPPRESSION is an ineffective mode of dealing with one's sexuality. SUPPRESSION leads to preoccupation which leads to obsession which leads eventually to gratification.

The third alternative stance is what was just mentioned, GRATIFICATION. This is the stance of our age, the so-called "sexual revolution." Rollo May calls this stance a "new puritanism" because of its use of the body as a machine, a detached pleasure device to be turned on and off at whim. This is puritanical because it is still dualistic and splits mind from body. This stance trivializes sexuality and debases what is truly erotic and creative, part of the very life force itself, to the realm of mere fun and games, trivial-pursuit. Sexuality gratified in such a mode becomes empty and meaninglessly repetitious, soon compulsive-addictive. Obviously, GRATIFICATION is the stance which leads pastors to feel "entitled" to act out sexually and engage in various forms of misconduct and abuse.

The fourth possible stance toward sexuality is one favored by Freudian psychology-SUBLIMATION. This is the psychoanalysts' ultimate solution to the problem of what to do with sexual thoughts, feelings and impulses. Freud nominated sexual energy as a basic life force, called *libido*. He decried repression and suppression as inadequate and ultimately self-defeating mechanisms inevitably leading to psychological difficulties. Contrary to popular belief, Freud also decried gratification as a solution. Humorously, Rollo May calls Freud a "Calvinist in Bermuda shorts," referring to a stance of rigidity and control. Sublimation is the channeling of sexual energy into other creative areas, be it artistic or humanitarian. Freudians reduce the entire religious commitment of the ordained and vowed life as a sublimation in itself. It is nothing more than a channeling or canalisation of libido. This too is inadequate because a person cannot put parentheses around his or her sexuality and turn

it into a selfless or altruistic life for others. Freud operated without a spiritual dimension in his world view which reduced any spiritual elements to biological and sexual processes. **SUBLIMATION** is part of a theory which reduces the life of the Spirit to the life of the physical body. According to Freudian theory we are motivated only by sexual drives and *pushed*, as it were, from within by them. Such theory regards human beings as *pushed*, basically, reacting to internal drives which determine behavior. Freud never understood the spiritual dimension that sees human beings as *called* by a personal God, and therefore, *pulled* and *invited* to a dimension of reality beyond the physical realms.

Lastly, what is left as the only appropriate way to take a stand toward one's sexuality that is available, productive, and practical and growthful? This is the stance of **INTEGRATION**. **INTEGRATION** is, first of all, a process, a process of ever more making-sense-out-of one's total experience of mind, body and spirit. **INTEGRATION** is *Incarnational* in the sense that spirituality in the Christian tradition is tied up with the Incarnation, the enfleshment and therefore sexuality of God himself in Christ. **INTEGRATION** does not ignore (repress), combat against (suppress), put parentheses around (sublimate), nor simply give in to (gratify) one's sexual thoughts, feelings and impulses. **INTEGRATION** honestly faces and addresses sexuality and strives to understand one's thoughts, feelings and impulses in the total context of one's relationship to oneself, to others, and to God. A model for integration exists in nascent form in the writings of Harry Stack Sullivan who envisioned the process to be centered around the experience of *Intimacy*. For Sullivan, by the time one is an adolescent there are three "needs" or what he calls "integrating tendencies" which motivate every person. These three integrating tendencies are self-esteem, i.e. the absence of undue anxiety and shame, the experience of genital sexuality, and the experience of interpersonal intimacy. Of these three integrating tendencies the primacy is given to *intimacy*. Intimacy becomes the experience which both enhances self-esteem and breaks through the barrier of shame which binds so many from childhood. Intimacy also gives context, relevance, and meaning—even ultimate, spiritual significance—to human sexuality. In optimal developmental sequence, one's childhood is the time when the issue of self-esteem or absence from shame is salient. Quite simply, one leaves childhood with a healthy sense of self-esteem or one doesn't. The experience of shame is thecrippler which vandalizes self-esteem. Children are made to feel ashamed about their "negative" feelings, especially anger, sadness, and sexuality. Children are made to feel unloveable and are programmed to learn they are defective, inherently failures, and of little worth. This is especially true when they grow up in dysfunctional or traumatically unloving families. In such families, normal and healthy developmental tasks are not accomplished and are simply postponed and left to later stages of life. We know from the beginnings of research that over half of those who enter the ministry and religious life come from these kinds of dysfunctional families. Unless emotionally corrective action is taken, such pastors, priests, and religious already have one strike against their ability to integrate sexuality into self-esteem and intimacy in adulthood.

According to Sullivan, we leave childhood behind and we enter a pre-adolescent stage of development with a critical experience of a nascent and tentative kind of intimacy. This takes shape in a non-physical yet emotionally close relationship with a same-sex peer. This

occurs before puberty and is not yet genitally sexual. This early intimacy is an emotionally corrective experience of affirmation and “consensual validation” (to use Sullivan’s phrase), which goes a long way in correcting or bolstering one’s sense of self-worth. In the past, some pastors, priests and religious have had this kind of intimacy vandalized by deformative rules and religious customs against “particular friendship.” Intimacy is an attitude, while genital sexuality is an act, and there has been much fear in seminaries and formation that if persons are allowed to be close, intimate friends (an attitude) they will inevitably act out or gratify their genital sexual thoughts, feelings, and impulses. Yet the case being presented here is that such prohibitions against interpersonal intimacy lead some individuals, already shamed with low self-esteem, to act out such impulses and gratify them.

What happens when a shame-filled pastor, priest or religious, with low self-esteem, and no intimate companions encounters a delayed genital sexuality for the first time as a driving and powerful force? In my experience such individuals know only how to gratify such desires, either in the form of compulsive masturbation or in the form of sexual misconduct and/or abuse of teenagers or adult parishioners. When sexuality is itself shamed, expect trouble. When intimacy, the experience of emotionally close friendship, is shamed, expect trouble. When spirituality is presented as angelic, and non-incarnational, expect trouble. Intimacy is the integrating tendency which combines an appropriate love and appreciation for one’s self, a similar love and appreciation for others, and especially for significant others—close friends, and the love and appreciation of God. Indeed, we can read through Augustine and John of the Cross and read powerful expressions of the intimate love of God with strong sexual analogies and metaphors to describe the inviting and captivating love of God in Christ.

INTEGRATION takes different shapes for married clergy and for celibate or vowed clergy and religious. Both married clergy and celibate/vowed are called to INTEGRATION. Fidelity and commitment to one’s spouse is the hallmark of married sexual INTEGRATION, while fidelity and commitment to God and to the church and/or community is the hallmark of celibate or vowed INTEGRATION. When ministerial and religious community or family structures enhance a person’s self-esteem and are non-shaming and enhance interpersonal intimacy as well as intimacy with God, then sexuality may be integrated into one’s life and commitments. When a person’s sense of self and appreciation of personal feelings as well as close friendships are shamed, then sexuality remains detached, only to be physically released and gratified.

Many of the pastors, priests, and religious that come to treatment have misused genital activity and its gratification as a frantic, compulsive, and self-defeating means of bolstering poor self-esteem, chronic loneliness, and emptiness and as a way to short-cut the friendship/intimacy process. By inappropriately acting out or gratifying their sexuality in misconduct or abuse, further shame is engendered. This increased sense of shame then reignites the downward spiral of gratification.

Shame-based stances towards sexuality only lead to REPRESSION, SUPPRESSION, GRATIFICATION, OR SUBLIMATION. The only stance not shame-based is INTEGRATION. Given the present climate of sexual misconduct and abuse by pastors, priests, and

religious, it would seem that healthy and practical models for attaining INTEGRATION have not been articulated nor practiced. This article is an attempt to begin to articulate a healthy model for addressing one's sexuality in terms of INTEGRATION, using a Sullivanism framework for understanding the pivotal role of intimacy. Intimacy is ultimately Trinitarian and the spiritual, incarnational linkage between self, others, and God.

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Sexual Misconduct in Ministry What Clergy At Risk Are Doing About It

by James A. Sparks, Robert O. Ray, Donald C. Houts

Sexual misconduct by clergy takes a devastating toll on victims, congregations, offenders and their families, and on entire denominations.

The problem has become so serious that a number of states including Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Colorado, and South Dakota have laws against sexual misconduct by clergy or counsellors. While many cases have been settled out of court, others have been prosecuted in criminal and civil courts under strict state statutes. Under the criminal provision, one Wisconsin pastor who rationalized his sexual misdeeds as therapy was recently charged with felony misconduct, pleaded no contest, and narrowly escaped a prison sentence. Many parish clergy express concern about doing ministry where their exposure to risk seems high amid heightened social awareness around the issues of abuse and professional exploitation. Long established practices of ministry concerning counseling and visiting now appear suspect in the view of a growing number of ministers and priests.

We discovered these concerns in a recent survey of nearly 400 clergy who had participated in a landmark clergy continuing education program of the University of Wisconsin-Madison aimed at preventing sexual misconduct. Produced in 1989-90, this video/discussion program was the first nationwide attempt to reach a broad denominational base using a prevention resource. The program focused on helping clergy to better understand the nature, scope, and consequences of ministerial sexual misconduct, to clarify professional boundaries of ethics and practice and to assess whether they were at risk because of naive or careless ministerial behavior.

At least twenty percent of the 400 clergy who responded felt they were vulnerable or saw themselves as being at risk based on what they learned from the program. Responses to evaluation requests included:

"I've always felt a little smug that I wasn't at risk, but the seminar helped me own my own struggles."

"Prior to the course, I never gave the whole situation much thought. Afterwards I became aware of my own liability and perhaps aware of other people's mixed motives."

One respondent to the survey reported that he had been in treatment for his sexual acting out and that the seminar "deepened commitment to recovery from sexual addiction." Donald C. Houts, a pastoral counselor, was not surprised by this heightened awareness of program participants. As leader of nearly twenty-five seminars using the University of Wisconsin materials, he reported that four ministers admitted to "beginning affairs" with parishioners and two came forward to confess their addiction to pornographic material ("Clergy Sexual Ethics: a Workshop Guide," *Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, Inc.*, 1991).

Who's At Risk?

Of the twenty percent who thought themselves to be at risk, four were women and fifty-five were men. This means that twelve percent of the total number of women felt at risk while twenty percent of the men believed themselves to be at risk. With the exception of those thirty years old or less, the at-risk respondents were equally distributed throughout the other age groups. Twenty-one (nineteen percent) of all those in the thirty-one to forty group said they were at risk, sixteen (twenty percent) of those in the forty-one to fifty age group said they were at risk, and (nineteen percent) of the fifty years or older group reported being at risk. Only one of the ten respondents (ten percent) under thirty reported being at risk.

We're puzzled by this finding. Does this mean that the younger clergy feel better prepared and more confident? Or are they inexperienced and naive?

Then we looked at the size of the congregations served by the at-risk clergy. We used Arlin J. Rothauge's categories ("Sizing up a Congregation for New Member Ministry," The Episcopal Church Center, date unknown), to describe the kind of congregational settings that our respondents served:

The Family Congregation (0-50) has many characteristics of a family with strong parental figures. The minister functions mostly like a personal chaplain to the members. Conflicts with the patriarchs and matriarchs are not uncommon.

The Pastoral Congregation (50-150) depends on the leader for direction, inspiration, and pastoral care. Parishioners treat this person as a pontiff one moment and as a peer the next.

The Program Congregation (150-350) looks to team leadership rather than a central do-it-all minister. As the size of the congregation increases, so does the concern about "improving communications."

The Corporate Congregation (350-500+) operates much like a business where the central or "star" pastor directs the organization as the CEO of a corporation might do. Only a few of the parishioners may know this person closely.

The following table indicates by size of congregation the number of at-risk clergy serving that category compared to those who said they were not at risk.

Congregation Type	Size	At Risk (n)	Not At Risk (n)	% At Risk
Family	(0-50)	8	14	36.4
Pastoral	(50-150)	9	40	18.4
Program	(150-350)	14	68	17.1
Corporate	(350-500+)	28	126	18.2

What stands out in this table is the high number of clergy serving the family size congregations who feel they might be at risk. we can only conjecture that in small congregations relationships are more intimate and the pastoral role more closely tied to a tradition of clergy being available at any time day or night. The counseling environment may include offices in isolated settings or visits in the home with no one else present.

Changes in Ministry Practice

Of the clergy who said they felt themselves to be at risk, seventy-six percent said they were changing ministry practices that made them vulnerable. Not surprising, many of these changes centered around the where, when, and how of counseling, and touching, especially the “pastoral hug.”

In “Sexual Exploitation by Clergy and Pastoral Counselors” (Schoener and Milgrom, 1990), the authors observe that because pastoral work often takes place in settings other than a counseling office, it is not easy to define what a counseling relationship consists of in a religious setting. Therefore, we were not surprised to learn that at least half of the clergy who indicated they felt at risk had changed some aspect of their counseling. Words that appeared most often in the open-ended responses were “using more caution,” “avoiding compromising situations,” and “having greater awareness of vulnerability.” Many of these reported they no longer counseled women in homes or offices without someone being close by.

Several indicated that when counseling in their offices, they left the door open. At least seven pastors said they told their spouses when counseling alone in their offices or making home visits on single women.

One pastor said he has become more cautious about what he shares personally with counselees during sessions. Another said he has become more conscious of his “thought life” which we interpret as fantasies. Three pastors said they are more intentional about their mental preparation before going into high stress, crisis, or “potentially compromising situations.” One pastor said he counsels women with a female colleague. Still another believes it important to confer regularly with a supervisor about his counseling.

Several pastors now limit the number of sessions they spend with a counselee. The limits ranged from two to six sessions before referring.

The issue of touch—whether to touch and what kind, especially the pastoral hug—worries thirteen percent of the clergy who reported feeling at risk. In their open-ended responses, several thought it prudent to eliminate hugging at the end of a session. Others said that keeping physical distance in the office helped with the emotional separation they felt was necessary. One pastor said he had stopped holding hands with counselees during prayer at the end of a session.

At least two pastors from the at-risk group expressed their ambivalence about the appropriateness of touching:

“I have a natural inclination to give hugs, but I don’t do that anymore. That is frustrating because I still sense that is what many people need from their pastor.”

"No hugging if sensing, either rationally or emotionally, attraction on either my part or the counselee's. Much more aware of my feelings and trying to sense the counselee's feelings. But I haven't cut out all hugging per se."

While the use of touch in their ministry concerned only a relatively small number of respondents, we noted that nearly seventy percent felt the program reinforced what they either believed or practiced in their ministry. Our survey did not attempt to discover whether the scales tipped in favor of appropriate touch or away from it. Since the use of touch is so important in human interaction, as well as emotional and physical healing, further research is needed to delve into its meanings and practice for clergy.

Changes in Personal Life

Thirty percent of the clergy who thought they were at risk also indicated changes in their personal life. Many repeated what they had already written as changes in their professional life—being cautious, not counseling in isolated settings, and being more self-aware. They mentioned "not dating parishioners," "being more aware of friendship vs. pastoral relation," and "taking out more liability insurance."

Fifty percent of the at-risk group who noted changes in their practice of ministry did not list changes in their personal lives. When a panel of consultants reviewed this finding, they thought it revealed a lack of integration between personal and professional life. How can you change practices in ministry without also addressing the personal side of life, such as family, friends, and others in one's social network?

On the other hand, twenty-two percent of the 337 respondents who said they were not at risk reported changes or intended changes in their personal life. This not-at-risk group seemed even more adamant about being sharply self-aware and cautious of potentially risky personal and professional situations:

"Exercise greater care in my response and approach to persons. This is more a matter of greater caution in relation to self-protection and awareness of how one's words and actions may be interpreted by others."

"Be more careful in all interactions with the opposite sex."

"Try to find situations where I won't be alone counseling, but that is very difficult for single ministers in rural charges. What about confidentiality?"

One fifty-eight-year-old minister said he planned to have counselees sign statements first and then he would tape record sessions after the first interview.

Only a few of the at-risk group (one out of fifty-nine) and the not-at-risk group (seven out of thirty-seven) mentioned paying attention to spouse and family. Five listed self-care as a perceived change, but did not indicate what forms this took. One sixty-four-year-old pastor simply noted this intended change in his personal life: "Retire as soon as possible."

Finding the Support for Changes

When clergy change in the way they go about ministry—particularly if it's a departure from tradition—it affects the congregation. Sixty-eight percent of those who said they were at risk reported they had discussed their intended changes within their congregations. Most of them talked with lay leaders about their participation in the program (fifty-seven percent), discussed changes in their counseling practice (thirty-three percent), and held discussion sessions (ten percent).

Forty-seven percent said their congregation, institution, or denomination could better support them in the ethical practice of ministry. Along with more seminars and training (thirty percent), they indicated the need for guidelines and policies (twenty-six percent) and the need to keep the issue alive at (twenty percent). Some of the open-ended responses include:

“Women treated first as capable humans, second as gender.”

“Trust my personal judgments of behavior.”

“Help congregational leaders see the need to change counseling practices (bishop has sent letter).”

“Include laity wherever possible in the seminars.”

“Lighten-up.”

Donald Clark, Chicago, an attorney who represents religious groups in the midwest, affirms this need for congregational and denominational support: “Denominations can serve their laity and clergy—as well as meet their legal obligations—through well-crafted educational programs, clearly-defined prevention strategies, and sensitive procedures for processing allegations of wrongdoing.”

Observations and Reflections

1. While the survey did not attempt to identify clergy who had violated sexual ethics in ministry, we think it significant that twenty percent saw themselves as being at risk. This falls within the scope of Lloyd Rediger's research (*Ministry & Sexuality*, Fortress Press, 1990). Rediger writes:

“My research indicates that approximately ten percent of clergy (mostly male) have been or are engaged in sexual malfeasance. Another fifteen percent are on the verge—waiting for an opportunity. Many of these clergy do not realize how vulnerable and close to disaster they are. Seventy-five percent of clergy are functioning well; but, they too, are more vulnerable than previous generations, due to the inadequacy of the typical clergy support process.”

Our research indicated that about half the clergy thought there was more sexual abuse now than in the past.

But David Hardy, general counsel for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, disagrees. “There's no greater incidence of clergy sexual abuse today than in the past,” he said. What we're dealing with is victims who are more willing to come forward and a backlog

of cases.” **FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:** Are clergy more at risk of sexual exploitation today than in the past? If so, how?

2. Educational approaches can be effective in addressing clergy sexual ethics issues. In our view, this offers hope for the thousands of potential victims and offenders and for the congregations and denominations they represent. Prevention is a stated aim of the University of Wisconsin program and prevention begins with awareness. Although we did not pretest participants who participated in the Sexual Ethics in Ministry seminars to ascertain their level of understanding before, we think it significant that over fifty percent—whether they perceived themselves to be at risk or not—indicated they made professional and/or personal changes.

This compares favorably with the prevention/awareness approach of George Gafner and Virginia Trudeau. In the Boundaries Program for caregivers, videotaped vignettes and discussion are used to make participants more aware of ethical dilemmas. Gafner and Trudeau found that eighty percent of the participants experienced a change of attitude with respect to what constitutes appropriate behavior in client-staff relationships (Schoener, Symposium at the 1991 convention of the American Psychological Association, “Therapist-Client Sex: Approaches to Preventive Education”).

Although seventy percent of the 400 respondents said they were required to attend the Sexual Ethics in Ministry program, fifty percent rated the seminars as highly effective and forty-five percent as somewhat effective. The percentage of those who appreciated the leadership was virtually the same as those who elected to attend. Of those who were required to attend, eighty-four percent said they would have come anyway. While this last finding does not in itself suggest mandatory training to deal with clergy sexual ethics, it does indicate clear interest in the topic. In other words, requiring attendance does not negatively impact those participants required to come. **FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:** What resources have you found to be helpful in understanding this issue?

3. Important as it is in ministry, counseling creates risky situations because of confusions about transference and counter-transference. Transference occurs when counselees project onto the pastor or counselor feelings of attraction, love, and even anger. Counter-transference occurs when the counselor projects these feelings onto the counselee or parishioner.

Also, since the mid 1980s, when clergy sexual misconduct came under public scrutiny, clergy have become more thoughtful about their own power as ministers, boundary definitions and limitations in relationships, and appropriate settings for counseling. The open-ended responses from the not-at-risk group seemed to center on self-protection and avoiding any appearance of compromise. **FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:** Are you doing counseling and home visitation differently because of heightened concerns about sexual ethics in ministry? How?

4. Clergy need congregational and denominational support to maintain personal and professional balance. Kelly Walker, writing in the May 1992 issue of *The Practice of Ministry in Canada* says:

“I am more and more convinced that the minister or therapist who is not involved in a

constructive growth process with the help of another is not safe. The demands put on us these days are too enormous for us to carry alone. They demand the collective wisdom and compassion of another or a few.”

As continuing educators with many years experience in training and ministry, we think these issues need to be addressed again and again through denominational support, seminary preparation, and continuing education programs. Prevention costs less than intervention. **FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:** How can your congregation, institution, or denomination better support you in this area?

5. The where, when—or if—of touching and hugging continues to perplex some clergy. When this issue was discussed in the seminars, twenty-four respondents indicated that they were uncomfortable with it, and many of these indicated drastically limiting touching or giving up on it entirely. Seventy percent of the clergy felt affirmed in the way they deal with touching/hugging in their ministry. We can only assume that some touch and hug appropriately, without discomfort, and others do none of it and feel O.K. **FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:** With mounting concern about appropriate touch vs. inappropriate touch, are we sacrificing compassion for safety? Should we?

6. In this study we have discussed the more dramatic findings in our evaluation of the first national training program for clergy around the ethics of ministerial practice. However, we would be remiss if we didn’t report that even though twenty percent felt at risk, seventy-seven percent of the 400 clergy also felt confirmed in the various aspects of their work listed in the following table.

Practices	Percentage
Set professional limits	81.2
Take care of one’s marriage	74.4
Self awareness	70.2
Appropriate use of touch	69.3
No counseling in isolated settings	68.6
Dealing with compromising situations	60.2
Keep emotional distance	49.8
Approach to calling	33.0
Total cases	309

It may be too early or even impossible to assess whether the incidents of sexual misconduct will drop because of social and professional awareness resulting from seminars such as the one developed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. However, one fact is clear—most denominations are taking sexual exploitation by clergy seriously, and their educational efforts are making an impact on how clergy practice their craft. **FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:** Can the denominations do more?

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Maintaining boundaries is a difficult task
for which many clergy have received no training

The Cell Wall: A Metaphor for Good Boundaries

by Thomas Harries

A rash of sexual exploitation lawsuits has forced the question of appropriate personal boundaries on to center stage in the church. The response of secular society has further raised the level of anxiety. In Minnesota, for example, a new state law aimed at preventing sexual exploitation by counselors specifically includes clergy.

Fearful of an unfounded accusation, we clergy may respond by withdrawing from pastoral contact. One minister may decide she will never again, under any circumstances, hug a parishioner. Another may avoid any comment about appearance for fear he will be misunderstood. A priest may stop pastoral counseling altogether, or do it only when a secretary is in the building.

But we cannot do effective ministry under these conditions. Vital ministry means bringing the Gospel to people and caring for them. Only by connecting with people can we clergy do this. We need to enter people's lives and let parishioners enter ours. At the same time, effective ministry demands that we maintain appropriate boundaries and respect the boundaries of others. Recent events have focused our attention on boundary issues of sexuality, but the skills to handle boundaries in this volatile area are also needed for the crucial boundary issues of money, power, and time. Maintaining boundaries is a difficult task, and one for which clerics have not necessarily been trained.

The challenge is akin to one faced each day by the individual cells of our body. The cell's basic task is a life-giving one; it nourishes and maintains life and generates new growth. To do its job, the cell must discriminate between which things to let in and which to exclude, between which to hold in and which to eject. This is possible because every cell is bounded by a plasma membrane, an extremely thin skin separating the cell from its environment and from other cells. The cell wall serves as a line of demarcation between the cell and surrounding tissue. It also controls the transport of molecules in and out of the cell.* This cell wall provides an excellent metaphor for the human process of setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries.

One function of the cell wall boundary is to safeguard the cell from harm. Our cells are not alone in this task. Our body has several layers of defenses which reduce the number of viruses and bacteria reaching internal cells. Skin itself is the first line of defense, followed by various elements of our immune system. In society also we have several lines of defense which try to eliminate the greatest dangers before they get to us. Police, fire, and public health departments spend their days removing glaring threats to our lives. When these systems

*This and all statements about cell biology are based on the "Cell" article in the *Academic American Encyclopedia* (Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc.)

break down, we are in much greater personal danger.

Within the church, the wider religious community also can help protect the individual. The Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota, for example, has undertaken a background check of all clergy in an attempt to reduce the danger of exploitation to individual parishioners.

However, no environment is totally free of danger, nor can it be made so. Often things which are potentially dangerous, or dangerous to some cells, are also essential to the functioning of the system. In addition, there are always viruses which penetrate the outer defenses trying to get in and take over the cell for their own purposes. Some toxins are not recognized by the immune system defenses and so pass unchallenged to the cell wall. Each of these situations has parallels in society and church. For example, until quite recently the largely male church and legal systems failed to recognize sexual harassment as a significant problem. As a result this virus passed freely through society attacking individuals, usually women.

In the body, then, the cell wall has the ultimate responsibility to keep out those things which will be harmful. In society too it is the responsibility of each person to maintain boundaries and exclude toxic elements. We must learn how to identify dangers and keep them outside our bounds.

As important as defense is, a cell cannot simply exclude everything beyond its own walls. It must let some things in. The cell needs energy and materials to carry on its life. In a complicated organism it must also receive instructions from the nervous system and participate in the life of the body. Similarly, we must admit our own needs and welcome into our lives those persons and things which can nourish and enrich us, enabling us to minister effectively. To concentrate merely on shutting out danger places us at risk of diminishing both our own lives and our effectiveness in ministering to others.

An equally important part of the cell wall's job is deciding what should be allowed out.

Individual cells cannot cope with their own toxic debris. The cells which ferment a superb bottle of wine are eventually killed by their own alcohol production. The body has an elaborate system for removing toxins excreted by the cells, but it is up to the individual cells to let go of what can poison them. At the same time, letting the wrong element out can leave the cell itself with insufficient resources to function or can be toxic for the surrounding cells.

We too need ways to remove or neutralize some of our debris. Nevertheless, it is important to regulate how and when we do this, lest we become toxic to those around us. Jesus recognized this when he said, "Not what goes into a person, but what comes out defiles." Fortunately, unlike cells, we have choices about where to dump our ill humor and harsh opinions.

The cell wall is not perfect. Sometimes it is fooled into letting the wrong thing in or out. Viruses often disguise themselves as some useful bit of information or material. Thus they are able to slip through the cell's defenses. Or a bacteria, having evaded the immune system, may simply overwhelm an individual cell. In each aspect of the cell wall's function, there are times when something goes wrong.

Like individual cells we will sometimes be fooled, overwhelmed, or simply make a

mistake. Unlike individual cells, however, we can usually recover from such errors. We also have a major advantage over cells in our ability to learn from one another and change our behavior. A consultation or support group is an invaluable place for such learning to be shared.

To function effectively as ministers we need some of the same skills our cell walls display. There are no simple rules or answers. We can neither exclude everything nor let everything in. We can neither say nothing, nor say everything that comes to mind. Like our cells we must learn to decide accurately which information to let in and which to exclude, which material to allow out and which to contain. For ourselves as well as our cells appropriate boundaries are crucial to our function as lifegivers.

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Finding hope for the victims, the offender, and the congregation

. . . In Cases of Clergy Sexual Abuse or Misconduct

by David R. Brubaker

Bishop Allen Brown received the call from Ms. Jane Carson at 9:15 on Tuesday morning. Bishop Brown had met Ms. Carson only once, during a welcoming luncheon for her last year when she assumed a staff position at the Calvary Hills congregation. She asked to meet with him as soon as possible—preferably that same day. She was hesitant to explain the purpose of the meeting or the reason for its urgency. Bishop Brown agreed to meet with her at 5:00 that afternoon, the earliest he could possibly do so.

Ms. Carson began the meeting by assuring the bishop of her generally high regard for the senior pastor at Calvary Hills, Rev. Dan Smith—especially his preaching and pastoring abilities. However, two female members of the congregation had contacted her within the last two months to confide that Rev. Smith had acted inappropriately with them during counseling sessions. In both cases, the women reported that Rev. Smith had encouraged them to “let him hold them” during sessions, and eventually had attempted sexual fondling. One woman eventually rejected the advances and never returned for counseling, while the other woman continued in the relationship.

Ms. Carson further explained that she went twice to Rev. Smith to confront him directly with her concerns, but that Rev. Smith first denied the allegations and then blamed the women for attempting sexual advances with him. Bishop Brown concluded the meeting by thanking Ms. Carson for sharing her concerns, and assured her that he would talk with Rev. Smith about them and then get back to her. He asked her if he could report to Rev. Smith that she was the one who informed him, and she reluctantly agreed that he could.

Rev. Smith met with Bishop Brown a week later over lunch in a restaurant where they could be assured of privacy. Since the bishop himself had recommended Rev. Smith to the Calvary Hills congregation about three years ago, he had followed his apparently successful tenure with interest. After initial pleasantries, Bishop Brown decided to introduce the more unpleasant subject by mentioning that he met last week with Jane Carson. Rev. Smith responded immediately, and in a manner that surprised the bishop.

He informed Bishop Brown that Jane had been a real disappointment since the church hired her last year. According to Rev. Smith, Jane is a “feminist” who “can’t deal with men in authority positions” and indeed has been “trying to undermine my ministry ever since she arrived.” Bishop Brown was stunned, as his brief interaction with Ms. Carson did not lead him to the same conclusions. But he persisted to pass on her report, and asked Rev. Smith for his comment on the allegations by the two counselees.

Rev. Smith nodded in an understanding way as the bishop presented the allegations. Rev. Smith asked the bishop if he knew either of the two women involved, and Bishop Brown admitted that he did not. “These are both very troubled women,” Rev. Smith said, “who come

from very dysfunctional marriages. They are desperate for affection, and when someone like me shows some understanding and concern they misinterpret that as physical interest. I literally had to push one of these women off of my lap when she attempted to force herself on me." The explanation sounded convincing, and Bishop Brown bought it. The next day he called Jane Carson to assure her that Rev. Smith was himself the victim of false allegations.

Six months later Bishop Brown received another call, this time from a Ms. Mary Dawson. Ms. Dawson identified herself as a parishioner at the Calvary Hills congregation, and also as a "counselee" of Rev. Smith's. She further informed Bishop Brown that she and five other "counselees" had been victimized by Rev. Smith's counseling "techniques," and that the six of them had discovered each other over the course of the last three months. The victims, Ms. Dawson stated, had decided that Rev. Smith's misconduct had to be stopped. If Bishop Brown was unprepared to act, then they were prepared to talk with an attorney. They also were prepared to tell the Calvary Hills congregation, despite their fear that many members would instinctively support the pastor and disbelieve them.

When Bishop Brown hung up the phone he noted that his hand was literally shaking. Unsure where to turn, he decided to call the denominational headquarters to seek guidance. Unfortunately, none was available. "We don't have any written procedures for dealing with this kind of case," one office informed him, "but I did hear that Bishop Johnson dealt with a similar case last year. You could call him to see what he did."

In this composite case, one of Bishop Brown's costliest mistakes was his attempt to deal with the allegations without benefit of outside counsel or professional assistance. Sadly, his denomination is also not yet equipped to provide any significant assistance.

In a survey I recently conducted of ten professionals who had intervened in cases of sexual abuse or misconduct by religious professionals (including victims' advocates, conflict consultants, offender therapists, and denominational officials), I discovered that many of the cases fit a pattern similar to the hypothetical case described above. The survey reached respondents who have collectively intervened in over 400 cases—the majority of which were reported by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle, where Rev. Marie Fortune is executive director.

The survey was conducted through both written questionnaires and phone interviews. The purpose was not to dissect individual cases, but rather to identify the patterns and commonalities in cases of sexual abuse and misconduct by religious professionals. The offenders in these cases included clergy, pastoral counselors, chaplains, lay leaders, therapists, and church administrators. Following are some of the major findings, as well as a proposed intervention process.

Common Themes

First, I discovered that it is common for more victims to be discovered as the case progresses. In many cases only one, two, or three victims were initially known, but when the case was fully uncovered anywhere from five to fifteen victims were identified. Marie Fortune writes, "Usually initially there is one victim but in virtually every case we have seen there are in fact multiple victims over a long period of time." However, because of the power imbalance in the relationship and the violation of trust which has occurred, a single victim deserves as much support and understanding as do multiple victims.

Second, the offender's response to the allegations tends to follow the pattern of initial complete denial, followed often by partial acknowledgment (where such admission is unavoidable) and rationalization of the involvement. Some offenders never leave the stage of complete denial; most place much or all of the blame on their victims. According to Marie Fortune, it is "only a rare case where the offender has acknowledged and taken responsibility for the harm he/she has caused."

Third, the church or organization's response to the victims often confirms the fear expressed by Ms. Dawson in the hypothetical case. Many of the respondents reported that victims were "shunned" by the congregation or organization where the abuse or misconduct took place. In some cases the shunning was due to misplaced anger at the victims, and in other cases to the phenomenon of "victim avoidance." Not knowing what to say or do, members avoided the victims and declined to hear their stories.

No respondent reported any case of "false accusations"—although I did not explicitly ask for it and presumably some do exist. One victim who answered the survey at my request expressed the pain of many victims who have been disbelieved. She wrote, "Please take victims seriously when allegations are raised. People do not make up these stories just for fun."

Aside from the three common themes reported above, the process used to investigate the allegations, the steps taken to provide discipline and accountability for the offender, and the group or individual who took responsibility for the same all varied widely. According to Marie Fortune, "Most judicatories simply don't know what to do with victims who come forward and file complaints against offenders. Their first reaction is to try to protect themselves against victims and to place themselves in adversarial positions against victims."

An Intervention Paradigm

Because of varying organizational polity and procedures, the process of investigating allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct against a religious professional will vary widely from organization to organization. Nevertheless, I propose that an intervention in cases of alleged sexual abuse or misconduct should be conducted at three levels: with the victims, with the offender, and with the church or organization where the offense has taken place. Because of the importance of dealing sensitively and professionally with all three, experi-

enced professionals (generally from outside the organization) should be involved in the intervention, as follows:

1. A trained victim's advocate, appointed to advocate for the victims throughout the process.
2. A therapist trained in dealing with sex offenders, retained both to conduct an evaluation of the offender and to consult with organizational officials regarding how to handle the offender.
3. A conflict consultant, appointed not to "mediate" between the victim(s) and offender, but rather to help the congregation or organization talk about what has happened.
4. An organizational official (or appropriate board or committee) knowledgeable in disciplinary procedures and able to coordinate the overall intervention process.

Once allegations of sexual misconduct are levelled against a professional, the organization should begin an immediate investigation, and—pending the outcome of the investigation—suspend the professional with pay. If an investigation confirms the veracity of the allegations, the organization should follow its own written disciplinary procedures for handling such cases. (For sample copies of church disciplinary procedures, contact the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle.)

Level One: The Victims

Once the designated organizational official or group has learned of allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct against a leader in the organization, they should immediately contact a trained victim's advocate and arrange with that person to interview the person(s) making the allegations. In most cases the presence of a qualified *female* victims' advocate is crucial to a successful intervention—given that in as many as ninety-six percent of cases of sexual exploitation by professionals the victims are female and the offender is male.¹

Some victims are also initially confused about the nature of the violation which they have suffered, and may even defend the offender. Thus, a part of the advocate's responsibility may be to explain the violation of professional ethics which has taken place, and to invite the victims to meet together as a group. Throughout the process, the victims will have a high need—and right—to be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and its eventual disposition.

Level Two: The Offender

The second step in the process is to contract with a therapist trained and experienced in dealing with sexual offenders, and to share the interview data with him or her. The therapist can then advise the organizational official(s) as to how to structure the confrontation with the offender. Neither the therapist nor the offender needs to know the names of the victims who have made statements, nor should the offender be provided with copies of the victims' statements.

Depending on the nature of the case and the organization's own procedures, the assessment, treatment, and discipline provided for the offender may vary widely. In every case, however, it is essential that the assessment be conducted by a therapist or center experienced in treating sex offenders. Walter Bera, a licensed psychologist from Minneapolis, works with sexual offenders in a process he calls "Victim-Sensitive Offender Therapy." Bera contacts all known victims while counseling the offender, both to insure that the victims' rights and feelings are central in the process and to avoid being "coopted and bamboozled" by the offender.

Because of the violation of trust which has occurred, it is unlikely that an offender could ever be reinstated in his previous parish or position—even following a successful treatment period. If the offender is transferred to another congregation or position with access to vulnerable clients or parishioners, then the new organization must be informed of his past problem, ongoing treatment, and current diagnosis. Failure to do so may have legal consequences, as well as the more obvious ethical implications.²

Level Three: The Organization

Even as it is coordinating intervention with the victims and the offender, the responsible organizational group should contract with a conflict consultant who can help the congregation or organization process the news that a leader has been found guilty of sexual misconduct. (If the allegations were proven to be false, then the purpose remains to help the group discuss what has happened. As noted earlier, false allegations are apparently extremely rare.)

Dr. John Gonsiorek, a clinical psychologist previously associated with the Walk-In Counseling Center in Minneapolis, suggested in a phone interview that in the case of abuse by a pastor or other local leader a clear announcement be made to the local congregation, followed by an opportunity for dialogue. If this is done, the presence of the victims' advocate, conflict consultant, and denominational official would all be crucial. Many laypeople need help in understanding the dynamics of the abuse of power and trust, and will also need support as they proceed through the stages of the grief process (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) that tend to follow such news.

The focus of the conflict consultant should thus be on providing safe mechanisms for members of the congregation or other group to talk with each other about what has happened. One of the most difficult decisions will be the nature and the scope of the information that is released. My own bias is that the scope of the information released should at least be commensurate with the scope of the abuse, although many factors will affect this decision and legal advice is appropriate.

The conflict consultant is generally not a victim-offender mediator, although he or she may refer the case to such a person after an appropriate length of time. Reconciliation between the offender and a victim, if it occurs, can be neither rushed nor forced. If—after months or years of therapy and support—a victim *chooses* to meet with the offender, that

meeting should be facilitated by a mediator experienced in victim-offender reconciliation (VORP).

The Rev. Margo E. Maris, canon to the ordinary for the Episcopal Bishop of Minnesota, has facilitated over twenty-five meetings between offenders and victims, in some cases years after the violation occurred. Margo Maris informed me that she works with a victim for six to fourteen months to prepare him or her for the meeting with the offender. In addition, the victim is invited to bring his or her therapist to the mediation session, and the offender is also permitted to bring an advocate.³

As is the case with incestuous families, leader-follower incest in organizational families cuts across all denominational, income, and ethnic boundaries. During my research I was informed of cases in mainline Protestant churches, Roman Catholic parishes, evangelical and anabaptist churches, and pentecostal and independent groups.

I have also developed the thesis that certain "family dynamics" in the organizational system can make an organization more vulnerable to abuses of power, including abuses in the sexual arena. Thus the conflict consultant may need not only to help members process their pain and confusion, but also to assist the organization in identifying formal structures and informal rules which permit incestuous conduct.

Conclusion: Fear and Hope

Perhaps the primary block to appropriate intervention in cases of abuse by religious professionals is fear. The organization fears that the offender may sue if it intervenes decisively or tells his secret, and also fears that the organization itself may fall apart if the deeds of darkness are brought into the light. Such organizations can be assured that while their fears are understandable, they are statistically unlikely to be realized. Offenders are generally so deeply committed to keeping the secret that they are loath to use a public forum like a civil court. And organizations, especially churches, are far tougher than we tend to assume.

Once the fear is overcome, we can intervene with a sense of hope for the victims, the offender, and the organization. With appropriate emotional, financial, and spiritual support, victims can take control of their lives and make a successful transition from "victim" to "survivor." When finally stripped of denial mechanisms and the enabling function of secrecy in the system, offenders are also able to truly repent (i.e., change behavior) and experience forgiveness. And the organization itself, if told the truth and assisted in processing its pain, can emerge with greater integrity, justice and self-respect.

According to Marie Fortune, what is needed now is both awareness (of the nature of the problem) and a "commitment to act boldly." If you have read this far in this article you have at least started down the path of greater awareness. May the Lord grant you the courage to act boldly if it is ever required of you.

NOTES

1. This figure is disputed by some other professionals in the field, who believe that male victims account for more than four percent of total victims. (Rutter, p. 20)
2. A note regarding legal issues: Seven states have passed laws since 1985 declaring psychotherapists' sex with patients to be a felony. The trend is clearly spreading, and may in some states include sexual involvement between pastors or pastoral counselors and their parishioners or clients. Contact an attorney in your state for further information.
3. Marie Fortune disagrees, noting that cases of victimization do not represent a "conflict between individuals in the church that (calls) for mediation and a negotiated settlement." (p. 66) Thus, "mediation is not appropriate because this is not a conflict to be mediated."

David R. Brubaker is a private conflict consultant and mediator who specializes in work with non-profit organizations. He also is an affiliate of the Mennonite Conciliation Service, and served as associate director of that organization from 1986 to 1988. David Brubaker would welcome your response to this article, including both new ideas and disagreement. Please write or call David R. Brubaker, Conflict Management Services, 221 Howard Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17602, (717) 393-3396.

Recommended Reading

Bera, Walter H. "The System/Attributional Model, Victim-Sensitive Offender Therapy." *The Use of Victim-Offender Communication in the Treatment of Sexual Abuse*, The Safe Society Press, 1990.

Fortune, Marie M. *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex Invades the Pastoral Relationship*. Harper & Row, 1989.

Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. The Guilford Press, 1985.

Heitritter, Lynn & Vought, Jeanette. *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse: A Sensitive, Biblical Guide for Counselors, Victims and Families*. Bethany House Publishers, 1989.

Rutter, Peter, M.D. *Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Men in Power—Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers, and Others—Betray Women's Trust*. Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1989.

Schoener, Gary; Milgrom, Jeanette; Gonsiorek, John; Luepker, Ellen; Conroe, Ray. *Psychotherapists' Sexual Involvement with Clients*. Walk-In Counseling Center, 1989.

Vredevelt, Pamela & Rodriguez, Kathryn. *Surviving the Secret: Healing the Hurts of Sexual Abuse*. Fleming H. Revell, 1987.

White, William L. *Incest in the Organizational Family: The Ecology of Burnout in Closed Systems*. Lighthouse Training Institute, 1986.

Note three resources available from your Alban catalogue: *Is Nothing Sacred*, by Marie M. Fortune, *Clergy and the Sexual Revolution*, by Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse, and *Ministry & Sexuality: Cases, Counseling, and Care*, by G. Lloyd Rediger.

Recommended Organizations

Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence
1914 North 34th Street, Suite 105
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 634-1903

Walk-In Counseling Center
2421 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 870-0565 or 870-0566

A Denominational Survival Kit for Afterpastors

by The Rev. Dr. Nils C. Friberg

If a clergy person acts in inappropriate sexual ways, and has to leave a congregation, how do denominational officials prepare an “afterpastor” to follow up in such a situation? This question was recently faced by a group of such afterpastors, along with some denominational officials, seminary professors, and family therapists.

This ecumenically diverse group of sixteen people met for three hours on March 27, 1992, in Minneapolis, MN, under the leadership of the Parish Consultation Service (PCS). Previously, in October, 1991, PCS personnel and afterpastors met to process their concerns. But this time the goal was to transmit these concerns to denominational executives and to formulate together a strategy for future situations. Our aim in this article is to describe that strategy. “A Survival Kit” is actually a set of guidelines, practices, and information which denominational leaders can put in place in order to prepare afterpastors well.

Afterpastors Need to Know Themselves Well

“Survival” indicates that such situations unleash forces which are dangerous to our well-being. Analogous to treating contagious diseases, caregivers of such congregations need to know how to avoid taking too much risk. Whether the polity of a congregation calls for an interim or the appointment of a more permanent replacement, the situation calls for people who are prepared to deal with such situations, personally readied, and well-supported by the proper networks. The afterpastor can endure, and the congregation can heal in their mission.

A first question to ask would be: Does this pastor have experience with difficult or conflictual situations? Mariners who face high seas need to know their ship. In the person of the afterpastor, there is a need to know their emotional resiliency, since frequent tests of coping strengths and stability will occur. According to the conference participants’ own testimony, afterpastors experience many difficulties: mood swings, exhaustion, temptations to abuse power, over-responsibility, and the pull of strong emotions regarding the perpetrator and/or victims. Congregational factions will push/pull leadership in many directions. The seas will be rough. Has this “mariner” been sea-sick before, and survived well?

Information Needs

Along with personal buoyancy there’s a critical need for the afterpastor to be informed about what may be faced with the congregation. This presents both reasonable and unreasonable expectations. Surfacing the impacts and complexities of sexual perpetration can sometimes be like playing “Capture the Flag” blindfolded, since the surprise factor often lurks there.

Emotional issues connected to a particular event have a way of linking themselves in unexpected ways to other events, past or current, particularly with sexually-related events.

For example, people with sexual abuse histories or persons who have knowledge of other pastoral sexual misconduct may react strongly to what is happening in the church. To be prepared, the afterpastor needs to know as much as possible about the history of this community, the facts of the current case, and the emotional status of the congregation.

Some data can be gleaned through interviews with denominational executives who have been involved. Other data must be collected through reading about typical psychological, social, and spiritual dynamics which congregations present in these circumstances (Cf. e.g., Nancy Hopkins' article, "The Congregation is Also a Victim: Sexual Abuse and The Violation of Pastoral Trust," The Alban Institute Resources for People Who Care About Congregations, OD88, 1992.) Still other information must be gathered on site.

Examples of needed information: what actually happened? What is not yet known? What are the feelings and attitudes present on the scene? What types of grief over loss of the perpetrating pastor are present? What grief over possible loss of victim's presence? How did the congregation learn of the "events?" How much do they know? Who knows what? What reactions to both the perpetrator and victim are evident? What theological formulations are being brought up by congregational members? What issues can be sensed around worship, liturgy, and sacred spaces, as well as issues around the symbolism of clergy persons/roles? Is there a need for "recertifying those sacred places, roles, and symbols? How should this be done?

Are people attempting to deal with the issues, or push them away? Are there victims and families who still need attention? Are factions forming themselves? What past attempts to help have succeeded or failed? Reasons? What past problems in the church lie under the surface or mixed with the dynamics of this event?

A Support Team

It would be important to form a support group to be constantly alongside the afterpastor to help strategize and sift through the congregational issues as they arise. The composition of this team could include such persons as a seasoned, mentor-pastor, a counseling psychologist/pastoral counselor, an attorney, and a denominational official. Variations of polity would affect decisions about who would be involved and how they would function. The congregation's own integrity and boundaries are to be respected, but the advice/guidance of such a group would be invaluable for informing the afterpastor, monitoring/representing the needs of victims, the offender and his/her family, congregational dynamics, disciplinary issues, and, most importantly, serve the nurture and accountability needs of the afterpastor.

Urgency is essential in the formation of such a group, since the window of opportunity to accomplish tasks in a timely and effective way with the congregation may be smaller than we realize.

Outside Resources

Judicatory persons should provide a list of counseling/therapy resources, and guidance concerning financing use of these resources. Can the denomination subsidize this counseling? What is available for assessment, advocacy, educational needs for individuals as well as the congregation? Does the church need to have an opportunity to process their feelings with an outside team trained for such a “debriefing?” Issues can pop up later, emerging only as people are ready to open up.

Judicatory Responsibilities

One subject needs stressing: denominational or judicatory personnel are often overloaded with diverse and multiple responsibilities. How will they follow-through with this afterpastor and congregation? Is there a structure for this? What about regular check-ups? How long does this process of aftercare need to be in place? What should the afterpastor and congregation expect?

Related Questions

Specific situations may shape the survival kit in peculiar ways. To guide this, there are some important questions. For example, will measures need to be taken concerning dangers of physical violence? What guidance is needed for dealing with the press, or other media? Are there complex legal issues needing counsel? If victims or perpetrator have hired attorneys, what impact does this have on information disclosure to the congregation? What is too much, or too little disclosure? How will our choices about disclosure meet the needs of the congregation to deal with the issues and heal? Are there special disciplinary measures that need monitoring or guidance from the denomination? Are there reactions by the congregation to the victim(s) which call for special educative or corrective measures? When should that education be done, and by whom? Have other clergy colleagues suffered from the impact of the situation who need attention? Has the perpetrator been moved to another congregation? Ramifications? Is the perpetrator still living in the community, and making contacts with congregational members, and in what manner? Effects? Is there an ongoing court case with publicity which causes unrest?

Justice for all

Overall, we must be vigilant concerning doing justice, tempered with loving mercy. We need even-handed handling of the congregation, the afterpastor, victim(s), the perpetrator(s), due process, telling truth in appropriate ways, and guarding confidentiality. There will be

occasions when we feel tension between our religious values and the demands of the legal system. At times these tensions seem to force our hand. We must resist being manipulated, and seek justice for all—admittedly a tough assignment. We need prayer and God's grace most of all!

Appendix

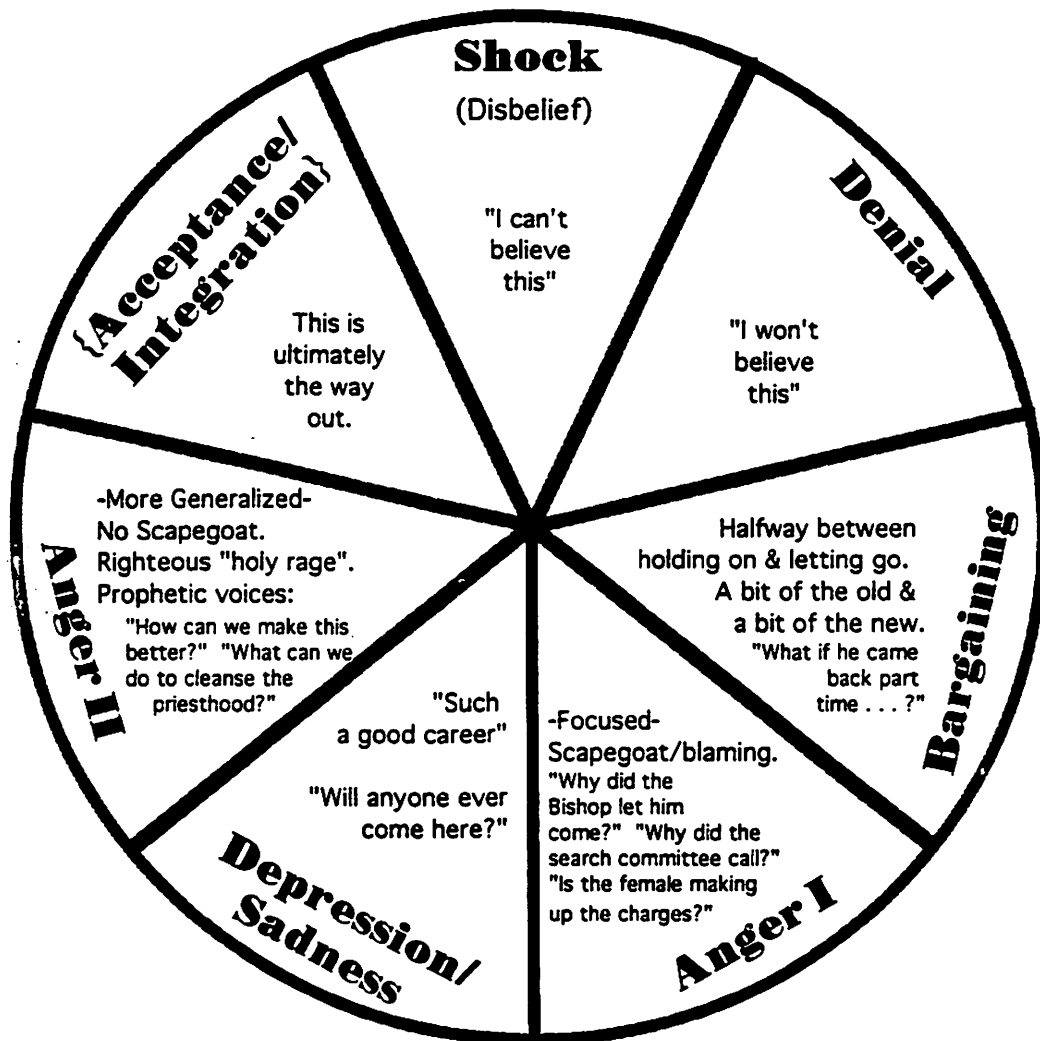
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Dimensions of Congregational Healing



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3 RULES:

1. People can enter at any point.
2. People can go clockwise, counter clockwise, or can jump across, again and again.
3. This circle tells people that no matter how different they look and feel, they are a unity.

The Congregation is Also a Victim

Sexual Abuse and Betrayal of Pastoral Trust

A Summary of research by the Parish Consultation Service

Q. What constitutes a betrayal of pastoral trust?

A. The most obvious and devastating betrayals of trust involve sexual abuse of children or exploitation of vulnerable adults by a clergyperson. Embezzlement or other law-breaking can cause great difficulty, as can other abuses of power by a clergyperson.

Q. What do you mean by vulnerable adults?

A. We are gradually coming to the realization that all adults are vulnerable if they are relating sexually to their pastor. Clergy are in powerful positions because of the psychological processes of transference and projection (also common to other professionals such as teachers and doctors). In addition, clergy occupy a unique position because of their involvement with major transitions in people's lives: birth, weddings, times of trouble, death. More important is the fact that clergy embody the divine for people. A breach of the trust therefore touches right to the heart of spirituality and faith. Other variables in such a relationship—age, gender, class, or racial differences—can make the power imbalance even greater.

There is no such thing as "consenting adults" when a parishioner gets sexually involved with his or her pastor. Persons who act seductively with clergy are often acting out of an earlier victimization, and are arguably the most vulnerable of all.

Q. What happens in a congregation when the trust has been betrayed?

A. If people are told the truth as soon as the abuse comes to light, a crisis occurs in the congregation. A grieving process begins, which if worked through with the help of sensitive and knowledgeable assistance, will eventually lead to acceptance, the final stage of the grieving process. Then the congregation will be able to get on with the job of being God's people.

Q. What happens if little is told to the congregation, and no process is put into place to help people eventually heal?

A. Congregations in which the secret is kept by a few and in which no open work is done on the issues usually become very troubled congregations. Some people get stuck in denial, others experience a great deal of anger which takes a variety of forms. Newcomers usually know very little and are thus kept out of the information loop. The secret takes on a destructive power of its own, separating those who know from those who don't. Trust is so shattered that

any clergy who follow have a very rough time, and many find they can not stay very long. A general sense of shame pervades. If there are other circumstances present such as a dying town, depressed economy, or many aging members, this intensifies the grief.

Q. What are some of the forms that anger takes?

A. Our research finds that anger is most often directed at denominational officials. Anger at the perpetrator is a close second, but only if people are past the denial phase and able to accept the fact that a clergyperson could behave in such a manner. Conflict is either repressed or there are intense fights about everything. People are sometimes angry at the victims, and often at the following pastor(s). Depression is common. Isolation and withdrawal are frequent. Trust recedes at all levels.

Q. Can a congregation begin to work on the issues long after a breach of trust has happened?

A. Yes, it is never too late.

Q. What are some of the elements in a healing process?

A. Truth-telling, as much as is possible without doing harm to victims.

Teaching about the nature of sexual dependency: causes, warning signs, prognosis for recovery, impact on family members.

Responding to others who may suddenly find they have personal issues related to sexual abuse.

Surfacing and validation of feelings of all members of the congregation, including work with the children if indicated.

Teaching about the congregation as a system, how it resembles a family, how it does not.

Teaching about the grief process.

Doing a complete congregational history, celebrating the saints and strengths, as well as facing the pain.

Connecting what has happened to the Gospel, and the Hope of Resurrection.

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**Full report available from The Alban Institute
4125 Nebraska Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20016 (202) 244-7320**

Assessing Readiness for Congregational Intervention in Cases of Sexual Misconduct

by Nancy Myer Hopkins, M.S.

Congregations that have experienced sexual misconduct by a clergyperson or other major betrayals of trust are severely traumatized congregations. Our research sketches the profile of a troubled community where some are in denial, others in extreme anger which may emerge in many manifestations and over long periods of time if no intervention for healing takes place. (Hopkins, 1992).

In a healing process, truth-telling and breaking the silence is the first, and often most difficult, step. People cannot begin to process their feelings about what happened, if they do not know what happened.

There are genuine obstacles to truth-telling, and other situations which may seem like obstacles, but really are not. It is important to be able to distinguish between them.

Old Cases

There are two major problems often encountered with truth-telling when the events are well in the past. The first is tied to the status of the victims, and the second is dependent on what agreements were made with the offender at the time of his or her leave-taking.

Sometimes there are one or more people in a congregation who a lot of people "know" were victims, but no direct victim has been willing to come forward and make charges, so that it has never been possible for the perpetrator to be confronted. These situations with "a lot of smoke" are extremely frustrating, and while it is possible to support victims in coming forward, they must not be pressured to do so, because the risks for them are far greater than for anyone else.

At the very least, church officials should call in the pastor, report the second-hand information, and hear the response. This is the time to clarify what the consequences of such behavior, if found to be true, will be. Sometimes this approach will be effective, but more often, not. It is still worth a try.

Another thing that can be done if multiple rumors are circulating is to require the clergyperson to have a thorough evaluation. I am talking about a three- to five-

day multi-disciplinary approach, from an institution which does a lot of work with sexual abuse. The judicatory officials should choose the place, and be active participants in the evaluation process. This is a fair way to be responsive to the needs of all parties involved, and this action also provides the church a measure of legal protection if later events prove the rumors to have been true. It is also a pastoral response to the clergyperson, though he or she may not think so at the time.

Sometimes in desperation, pastors who follow clergy who have a multitude of rumors circulating about them, have had to say to people who persist in repeating second-hand information, "If you can't give me first-hand information, or support a victim to come forward, I can do nothing, and I don't want to hear about it any more." Perhaps the only thing to be done for the congregation is to provide a lot of denominational support and training for the "after pastor who follows," so he or she at least is aware of the dynamics, and therefore not so vulnerable.

"After pastors" encounter another common problem when their offending predecessor struck a deal with his or her superiors and was allowed to retire quietly, having extracted a promise that his or her privacy would be forever protected. This was done very frequently until recently and, unfortunately, still occasionally happens today. This "solution" may at first glance appear to be the fairest one for all concerned, but now we are convinced that this course of action is extremely damaging to the congregation, as well as to the direct victims. We are strongly advocating that denominations write into their policies that a consequence of acting out will be that the congregation, as secondary victims, will be given the information they need to heal.

Here again, if it proves impossible to tell the congregation what happened because of promises made, then the best thing is to give support to the "after pastor." It might be possible to work with those who are known to be keeping the secret among the laity, but this is a delicate strategy and if not done sensitively, might even enhance their "in-group" status.

New Cases

One of the most devastating situations is when a clergyperson is arrested for soliciting sex or accused by a number of victims, yet is denying everything, and the case enters the ecclesiastical, civil or criminal court system. This results in much media attention, thus stoking the congregation's shame. The process of arriving at the "truth" is long and drawn out.

Church officials must understand the depth of pain and trauma this period of uncertainty causes, and realize that most likely there will be great polarization between those who believe the story, and those who don't. Until there is some resolution and understanding where the truth lies, everyone is in an excruciating holding pattern; the people will need support, and the initial approach involves telling people that what they are experiencing is normal, providing opportunities to know what can be known, and to vent in non-blaming ways.

Even when all the abusive behavior has been admitted to, or is a matter of public record, there are usually powerful inclinations to "leave well enough alone." The natural desire of most people is to put all the unpleasantness behind as soon as possible. Many people will be uncomfortable with resurrecting old pain, or breaking the norm of keeping the secret. Inertia is also common. Fear of a countersuit from the perpetrator, or surfacing of more direct victims, or encouraging victims toward suit are also very common. I do not know of any instance when truth-telling in a congregation has led to any successful legal action. Suit is often threatened by people who feel cornered, but it is a mostly empty threat.

Legal advisors to church officials are notoriously cautious. Happily, there are now some major exceptions, as more chancellors become educated to the needs of the community to know that truth in order to heal. However, many lawyers are still advising leaders to say no more than is absolutely necessary about anything to anybody. Legal advisors to churches are hired to think mostly about protecting the institution's property, which is a legitimate function. However, it is not helpful when that concern is excessive and directly conflicts with the health of the congregation.

As with other processes of recovery, some people in the system must be experiencing so much pain with the status quo that they will be willing to take the risks involved in a healing process. There is a relatively narrow "window of opportunity" when the crisis is fresh (everybody experiencing pain). This is when entree to the congregation is most easily gained.

Obstacles to Truth-Telling Removed

The steps in the intervention process are more completely spelled out in our research report (Hopkins, 1992). In those cases where truth-telling is possible, the elements in a healing process are: Giving sufficient details of the behavior and consequences so that denial is lessened (viewing the corpse); Surfacing and validation of feelings; building trust and community at all levels; educating about sexual dysfunction and the power imbalance between clergy and parishioner; celebrating the strengths as well as the weaknesses as revealed by history-taking; helping people with their own family of origin issues as they relate to the congregation's issues, and putting everything in a spiritual and theological context.

It is best to work slowly, in ever-enlarging group settings, beginning with the leadership. Allow people to either participate or not, scheduling sessions outside of regular church service and meeting times. Go with those who opt for openness and health, and count on them to "infect" the others.

An effective approach is to train members of the congregation to do their own work. The consultant needs to be willing to "fade" from the status of "expert" to that of "coach," and finally to that of "cheerleader." This approach will gradually empower those who have little reason at first to trust their own abilities.

The work is intense, but the results can be very rewarding. When the root causes of conflict are exposed and worked through, the presenting conflict often resolves itself. This is a powerful way for a congregation to embark on a profound spiritual journey, and to experience resurrection and renewal in surprising ways.

Note

Hopkins, Nancy Myer. *The Congregation is also a Victim: Sexual Abuse and the Violation of Pastoral Trust*, On Demand, 1992, copyright, 1993, The Alban Institute, Inc.

A Lutheran Pastor*

Anonymous

-- SEX ADDICT	-- SEXUAL ABUSER	-- PERVERT
-- PEDOPHILE	-- MORAL LEPER	-- CRIMINAL
-- MOLESTER	-- SEXUAL COMPULSIVE	-- DEVIANT

Four and one half years ago I had little idea what some of these words even meant. Never would I have connected any of them with me. Yet in the time since, each of these terms has been used in various efforts to understand, or describe, or define me. Up until then other titles and descriptions were commonly used:

-- TEACHER	-- PREACHER	-- YOUTH LEADER
-- BIBLE STUDENT	-- STRONG WILLED	-- IDEALISTIC
-- TIRELESS	-- ORGANIZED	-- INTENSE

Ordained Lutheran Pastor of 13 Years

While working as a pastor, I admit, I never had much use for those Christians who constantly harkened back to the moment of their conversion, that single moment frozen in time in the strong light of which they live every day thereafter. So it is ironic that, even now, it takes me no more than a few seconds to calculate that it was 4 years, 5 months, 16 days, 6 hours, and 14 minutes that I died and rose to new life—or rather, that I *began* to die and *began* to rise to a new life. Melodramatic? Yes! But intensely real and profoundly truthful.

And for a very long time the dying was much more real than the rising to new life.

In that moment frozen in time for me I was called to present myself before the Bishop and his assistant. I was confronted with information that had come to their attention to the effect that I had acted inappropriately—sexually—with a young woman from a former congregation. Lightning had struck. In one moment everything that I was and everything I had was threatened; and all that was security to me crumbled to sand and ran through my frantically grasping fingers.

Only for a moment did I try to bluff. Then, by the grace of God alone, I was able to step back from the rickety dam and allow the history of my abuse to pour through. Everything I could remember—all the names, all the events, all the secrets. I identified each of the adolescent girls and young women I had directly and repeatedly abused, as well as individuals

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and groups I had abused in more general ways, up to and including two large congregations in two states. In some cases I abused particular victims off and on over the course of more than 10 years.

In the days that followed, I was relieved of my duties, urged to get legal counsel, and referred to a treatment program for sexual addiction (whatever that was!). I was told not to show up for worship that Sunday. A week later I was asked to empty my office and leave without a word. Angry, isolated, and overwhelmed with shame and fear, I accepted a non-negotiable severance agreement and resigned my call as pastor. I struggled to comprehend the devastation I had brought upon myself and my family. I cried and shook, and tried to hang on and to act strong. I was falling off a high cliff in slow motion.

In my hurt I failed to notice the seeds of recovery sprout in an all-new honesty.

A month after my confession I was accepted into a "long-term treatment program," for sexual abusers and addicts for "as long as it takes." Had I known how long the next three years would be, I do not believe I could have made myself begin. The bishop's assistant warned it would be "amputation without benefit of anesthetic." It was.

The treatment program was based on the 12-step process of recovery and an addiction model. My own individual treatment plan included

- twice weekly two-hour group therapy sessions
- attendance at a series of lectures dealing with addiction, co-dependency, dysfunctional family systems, and similar topics
- eventually there would be weekly couples' groups
- and finally, weekly family group sessions would be added.

There is not space here to detail the therapy process, but it included abstinence and behavioral contracts, lengthy written and group processed assignments, long months of family of origin work, the dissection of the ritual and the setting up of each newly-recalled incident of acting out, and—perhaps the most painful part of all—living apart from my family for what turned out to be almost two years, and no contact with members of my former congregation which happened to include virtually every friend and acquaintance I had.

Yet, throughout, God was faithful. I can now look back with gratitude and amazement and see several keys to my recovery.

1. **Isolation.** For years I had been able to avoid coming face-to-face with myself—with all of me. Cut off from family, friends, and the job I so completely identified myself with, I was left with only myself. The pain of my losses and of my isolation was as intense as I can imagine, yet it now seems to have been crucial to my recovery. Perhaps it is similar to the way in which Israel in later decades was able to look back on its wandering in the wilderness and say, "It was necessary; we had to learn on whom to depend."

I looked for a long time with shame and disgust at what I had become and what I had done. But then, very slowly, there came acknowledgment without shame and a kind of self-acceptance. I found a very frightened, abused, and lonely child within me and embraced him. I found a very confused, shame-filled, insecure young teenager within me and learned how to parent him and encourage his growth to adulthood. I could not have done those things while

being super-pastor, while running in unconscious fear from the smothering intimacy of family, and while taking out my rage and anger on those girls I could get even as I was pretending it was sympathy, care, and affection.

2. Confrontation. I hated being vulnerable, having the weak and wounded child, and the stuck, confused angry adolescent show. I believed so strongly that my existence, my very *being* was in jeopardy if anyone really *knew* me, that I could not risk that exposure. I hated that the group could see through me. I hated that my therapist knew when I was hiding. I hated that my word-screens did not fool them. I hated that even an outburst of anger, as a last defense, did not keep them away.

All my life I had hated confrontation. I feared confrontation. I was in favor of honesty only if it did not mean confrontation. I valued diplomacy and stoicism. I covered anger with humor, or sarcasm, or with wordy arguments. I could *get* someone only if it was not obvious that I had, as in an athletic contest. I “knew” from experience that disagreement resulted in one or both of only two things: someone would get hit or someone would go away. I would be hurt or I would be abandoned. So, I could not *risk* confrontation.

In spite of these beliefs and the resistance they inspired, the group continued to confront me. I was forced to see the enormous delusions I had created. I was pressed to look again and again at my behavior, until I could stop blaming my victims for it. I was confronted until I could identify as sexual abuse what I wanted to excuse as “errors in judgment” or “misunderstood, innocent gestures of love and care.” I was forced to keep looking at my motives until I could see my behavior as full of deliberate acts of violence motivated by selfishness and the desire to control and hurt and to get back collectively at all those who had hurt me.

Only after being confronted in group time after time...did I grow to believe that confrontation was survivable and that confrontation could actually clear the air and result not in isolation but in relationship.

3. Taking Responsibility. Admitting to the truth of the allegations of my sexual misconduct was only the beginning in learning about taking responsibility. I was forced, first of all, to recognize my responsibility for the far-reaching *consequences* of my abusive behavior: the enormous economic consequences of the loss of my job and the expense of therapy; the frightening legal consequences, both past and potential; the incalculable human consequences in the lives of my wife and children, and in the lives of my sexual abuse victims.

Second, I had to learn that I alone am responsible not only for my actions and their consequences, but also for my feelings. No one *makes* me feel anything. I feel, and I alone am responsible for what I *do* with my feelings. I have no right to *use* someone else because I happen to feel lonely, or angry, or tired. I am responsible to do what I need to do to be healthy, to continue my recovery, to establish rules for my own safety, to care for my own support system, to take charge of my own boundaries. If, for example, I’m feeling ashamed (shame being one of the powerful drivers of my addiction), I take responsibility to do what I need to do to deal with it: to journal, to make a support call, to figure out what the trigger is, and to deal with that and to choose not to simply medicate the feeling by acting out sexually.

Lastly, I have taken responsibility for my future. If I abuse again, it is death. I stand to lose my family and everything for which I have worked so hard for four-and-a-half years. Everything hangs on continuing to be honest, aware, and willing to acknowledge and deal with who I am and how I am feeling.

Unquestionably, the most important *single* contributor to my recovery has been the treatment program, but there are also three other factors of great significance.

1. **SAA.** A week after I began the treatment program I found myself as a newcomer in a group of 15 men, all of whom described themselves as sex addicts. What so surprised me about this gathering was that they were at ease and totally intent on hearing my story. They nodded their heads in understanding as I described my out-of-control behavior; they were patient as I stopped frequently to gain composure; and when I dared to look up, after finishing, not a single one had left the room or thrown up in disgust. There was not a single word of judgement. Instead, one after another they rose to hug me and affirm my courage and honesty. I couldn't believe it! Nothing could have meant more to me or been more what I needed at that moment. For the next 56 weeks I did not miss a meeting of this local group of SAA. And in the years since I have continued to attend meetings, work on retreats, and do 12th-step interviews with prospective new members. I have an extensive list of support people for immediate phone contact, and many of them are part of this life-saving, progress-affirming group.

2. **Connection with Church Officials.** While I was immediately abandoned by my fellow pastor and most leaders of the congregation I was serving, I was not abandoned by the Church. Other area pastors were willing to be there for me and became my first-ever pastor friends. In addition, the bishop, his assistant, and even their office staff have been constant in their friendship, and willing to offer their help, their insight, their advice, and their prayers. They have not in any way condoned, excused, or explained away my past abusive behavior, but their contacts with me have been honest, respectful, concerned, and grace-filled—right out of the Gospel. They took the lead in seeking a fair severance agreement for me with the congregation; they have offered their good offices in my amends process with victims; and even now they struggle with me as to how to make use of my skills in ministry and my status as a pastor. I am in their debt for sticking with me and in the process for helping me to build self-respect and to crawl out of my shame.

3. **Family.** My wife is an extraordinary individual and my children are very special. For long periods during treatment our family was held together by the thinnest of threads. My abuse was part of an immensely dysfunctional family system, and had I persisted in my acting out I believe there is every chance that I would have molested my own children as teenagers. My lying and secrecy hurt my wife the most, as I denied and ridiculed all her suspicions and tried to deflect back onto her all responsibility for the state of our relationship. Her willingness to work and to fight for our family's health continues even now to challenge me to persist in the development and use of the tools I have found to keep myself healthy.

After all I have been through and done in these last years, I do not know if I am a sex addict according to anyone's definition but my own. However, I do know that though I used to be sexually abusive, now I am not. Though I used to live two lives, now I live one. Though I

used to live in constant fear of exposure, now I accept my imperfection and am honest about my failures. Though I used to feel out of control and my life was often unmanageable, now I have tools to handle the shame and the anger.

There are many things that still remain in my ongoing recovery. There are amends I still want to make—when the time is right. I still covet the opportunity to address or make myself available to the congregation from which I suddenly disappeared four-and-a-half years ago—when the time is right.

In addition, I believe I have some things the church can use. I have gifts (insight, experiences, empathy) I did not have when I last functioned as a pastor. I intend to work at being a good steward of these gifts, perhaps in helping the church to recognize and deal with addictions and abuse of pastoral power. I do not seek a soapbox, and I fear martyrdom. But I do want to risk doing the Gospel.

Sexual Addiction*

Anonymous

Ten years ago my life appeared to be perfect. I had graduated with honors from a prestigious divinity school. I had responsibilities and respect in my denomination and in the churches that I served. My family was proud. I had married the right man. I was impeccably dressed. I had done all the right things.

It was baffling to me that soon I was feeling dread and resistance for my work. Each day was harder to face than the one before. The better things looked the more troubled I became. I worked more and more for the church and I felt more and more a fraud every day. In return for my devotion to the church I had looked for my needs to be met. My needs were not met. No one noticed or cared or came to me. In my loneliness and fear, I began to live a double life.

There was this perfect life where I was professional and everyone's little darling. The side that pleased parents and married the son they never had. The side that had never rocked the boat. The side that appeared mature beyond years.

The other life was lived in secrecy and shame. I vowed each day to face my husband and work and fulfill my duties. By 10:30 most mornings I had spoken to my "mentor" by phone and agreed to "just lunch." I would return many hours later feeling ashamed and desperate. Often we would engage in sexual activity. Many weeks we spent 40 to 50 hours together. I thrived on the intensity and the attention. I felt bad and dirty, yet I told a therapist, "This man is why I get up every day."

One side of my life is built on the dreams of other people. The other is filled with shame and deceit. I was living a double life, but it was all a lie. I felt emotionally homeless and eternally exhausted. Every part of my life suffered. No one seemed to notice and in two years I received a promotion.

Let me say something here about my addiction. This is not about right and wrong—this is not about moral breakdown. I never once approved of my behavior. This is about life and death. The only way I could live another day was to be in an inappropriate sexual relationship. Long before I was sexually addicted I had learned to care for the needs and wants of others, but never my own. The only way I knew to live with this perfect life was to have my needs met in a hidden and shameful way. My addiction was destructive to my health and my marriage and to my career. My addiction gave me many dreadful days. It also kept my heart beating until I found recovery.

There came a time when the price of this double life became too high. I had too many responsibilities, too much guilt and loneliness. I couldn't go on. I wanted out. Out of my job and my marriage. I wanted out of this other relationship. I wanted my own life. But you

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see, addicted people cannot make good decisions about how to get what they need and want. I did get all I wanted by having an affair with a man in my church. While this method proved to be very efficient, only an addicted person could reason that this is a good way out of a painful life.

This affair quickly became public. Because the relationship was mutual I did not feel responsible. I was never confronted with breaking the sacred boundary between a priest and a lay person. I was simply asked to take a leave of absence from the ministry and all this was swept under the rug. There was the usual gossip and speculation, but for three years I heard nothing from my church or any of my clergy friends. Basically the message was: go fix this. I continued the affair for almost a year because it was all I had left. My marriage and family and church were gone. Their silence was a way of punishing me for my wrong. But mainly they just didn't know what to do or say. When, like I did, a professional violates the sacred boundary, he or she is in deep personal crisis. When a priest risks family and life's work and financial security for a sexual encounter, it is a cry for help. Hand-slapping, moralizing, and ignoring may seem to be in order. They are in essence like correcting the grammar on your teenager's suicide note. Listen to the desperation that is behind the action.

After several years I returned to the ministry. Before this could happen, I was interviewed by a committee of peers. Near the end of the hour it was I who brought up the relationship I had had with the man in my church. I knew that no one would mention the affair. I also strongly felt that this committee would have seen me as evasive and dishonest for what they could not bring themselves to say. I am sure that I would not have been allowed back into the parish if I had not opened the door for the incident to be explored. My open acknowledgment of the affair seemed to satisfy them. No questions were asked. Of course it has never been the same. This is not healed or forgotten. Not even time can heal that which is kept from the light of day. I often see disapproval in the eyes of my community. Sometimes it is really there—sometimes it is my own unfinished guilt.

Long after I returned to my parish work, my life still did not work. I lived like a victim—guilty and deserving of punishment. I had painful relationships and little success. I was not getting on with my life. In a stormy effort to get a family member into 12-step recovery, I found that for myself. Recovery has done for me what time and religion and therapy could not do. I have begun to heal and have hope for the future. For the first time in many years I have a life.

Recovery has helped me to see that the roots of sexual addiction are in early childhood experiences. Long before my mother sat me down to talk about the "facts of life" I had already formed my view of sex. At a very young age I got the strong message that sex is not OK—sex is bad—you must not do this or you will be punished. I grew up believing that if I were not a sexual person I would be good. To me sex was the only sin. Twice in my life I made attempts not to be sexual anymore. The first time was during a period of anorexia. At 90 pounds I looked more like a ten-year-old child than a 19-year-old woman. Part of anorexia was an attempt to return to a time before I looked and felt like a woman. The second attempt, ironically, was when I married. My husband was more a brother than a lover and we had never been sexually intimate. I knew that sex would not be part of our marriage. I believed that

sexuality was a choice, that I could decide to turn it on or off. I did not see sexuality as a God-given part of me. Everything about my sexuality was immoderate. Like that fear-filled child, I still believed that sex would bring on shame and punishment. Now I know that sexuality is a given—I only decide how and when that will be expressed. Looking back to early experiences is not about assigning blame. It is not about justifying any behavior. This is about looking back at parental attitudes and behaviors and making new decisions about my reaction. As a recovering adult I can choose not to accept my parents' fear and shame about sex. I can decide that sexuality is a good and meaningful part of life. I am no longer trapped by my dysfunctional family life. I no longer see inappropriate sexual relationships as an answer. Nor do I see pleasing and caring for others as my first responsibility.

One of the greatest gifts of my recovery is a more healthy spirituality. For years I feared trusting God because I did not want to give up my true self. Trusting God might mean that I had to give up my addiction and have to live with nothing. Soon after beginning recovery I realized that trusting God and being my truest best self were the same thing. Every day I want more and more to be the precious, unique, creative person God made me to be. No parents to please, no people to impress, no image to maintain, I trust that ultimately being true to myself will also be the best thing for the people I love. I have let go of years of pain and guilt and responsibilities that were not my own. Through friends in recovery I have gained the courage to take care of my needs and wants in healthy ways. I am no longer in constant distress over my life's direction. My higher Power once turned the sea into dry land so that some frightened people might find safety—a way was made for them. My God is making a way for me to get where I need to be. When painful times come, I am learning to ask, "What is the lesson—what could I learn from being in this mess?" I no longer see pain as my punishment, but as a necessary teacher.

In the years before my recovery I hurt a lot of people that I cared about. I have many amends to make. The greatest amend I owe is to myself. No one received more abuse, criticism, neglect, or punishment than my precious inner self. Being an ordained minister gave me a license to practice my codependent lifestyle. I had always been rewarded and respected for neglecting myself and for pleasing others. I now find a new level of respect and love from my recovering friends and from my other friends and family. As I have let go of old hurts and dependencies I have been gifted with new friends, and two very precious friendships have been restored to me.

Being a recovering person is my top priority and my greatest asset for being in ministry. My life was unmanageable for many reasons, and in many ways. Recovery has given me many unexpected gifts and strengths. I finally have begun to heal from the guilt and shame of my behavior, just when I had resigned myself to living with that the rest of my life. Through the Serenity Prayer I have discovered that one thing I cannot change is my past. It is done. What I can change is my attitude about my past, and the way that effects my future. I can see my story as a light to others who have lost their way. An important part of my own recovery is to say to others, "This is where I found Hope and a new life."

THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR

By Margo E. Maris and Nancy Myer Hopkins

Beverly was fourteen when she went on a youth group overnight. The youth minister had been giving her a lot of extra attention, and she felt for the first time in her life that a man whom she admired cared for her. Late that night, however, he slipped into the tent she had been assigned to by herself, and fondled her, all the while telling her he loved her and would wait until she got old enough to marry. Beverly was filled with confusion, and the continuing episodes which eventually involved many different kinds of sexual contact, triggered for her memories of her own father's abuse. It wasn't until Beverly found out that the minister was also involved with two other girls in the group as well as several women in the congregation, that she was somehow able to tell her mother what was going on. Her mother went to the senior pastor with the story, but was not believed. Furthermore, she was made to feel that she was to blame for anything that might have happened. Feeling totally discounted, Mother and daughter left the congregation, never to return to any church.

James thought Father Smith was just wonderful. The priest looked so holy when he said Mass, and seem so filled with faith. He was very popular with many in the congregation; witty, articulate, a hard worker. James was just beginning to struggle with his own doubts about his sexuality. He found himself attracted to people of both sexes, and thinking all the time about how to control his sexual urges. Confession seemed to help sometimes, but he found it painful to describe in full detail to Father Smith just what was going on. One day during confession, Father Smith fondled James, all the while asking if this was what he was talking about. Absolution was granted, but James felt anything but clean. However, James was hooked, and somehow the hope that this priest could cure him kept him in a very sick relationship for three years.

Unfortunately, these composite stories are not exaggerations. As horrifying and difficult as they are for the average person to comprehend, the true stories victims tell are often much worse.

When a person has been betrayed by a member of the Church in a position of trust, authority and power, a safe environment must be provided for that person to tell what has happened. People who have been injured have every right to expect that they will be given attention and care, and that justice will be done.

We use the term abuse when minors and/or vulnerable adults, such as the developmentally disabled, are the victims. The term exploitation most commonly refers to clergy misconduct with adults who are at risk. While clergy are the most frequent offenders, it is possible that other paid staff members or even

volunteers can also be involved in such situations. The definition of what constitutes an at risk adult is now generally considered to be anyone who is in a relationship where one person is providing a service, employing, mentoring or exercising leadership for another. Thus all parishoners may be vulnerable when relating to a clergyperson, all choir members when relating to a choir director, etc.

Clerical power and authority springs from the dynamics of projection and transference, as well as the embodiment of the Divine in the person of the ordained. This is not confined to counseling situations. In addition, there is a special bonding that occurs when pastors minister to families and individuals during the major milestones of their lives. It is also important to consider other imbalances of power, the most common ones involving age and gender differentials.

The behaviors which are considered to be abusive or exploitative range all the way from harassment - unwanted touching, propositions, and sexualizing of conversations - to the predatory targeting of a certain population, often resulting in a staggering number of victims. It is very rare for a person to be falsely accused. The personal cost of coming forward is considerable, and people do not take such a risk lightly. In the rare cases where accusations have been proven to be unfounded, it has been pretty obvious that the person making a charge has other emotional problems. Even with a severely disturbed or developmentally delayed person making charges, it must not be automatically assumed that person is not capable of knowing he or she was victimized.

It is difficult to exaggerate the impact of sexual exploitation or abuse on the victim. It is often easier for people to understand the impact of abuse on children. Even so, it is not uncommon for people to minimize the behavior or even blame children. Sometimes a subtle form of discrimination happens if the child victims are from poor or marginal families. as if somehow they brought the abuse on themselves.

An adult victim may believe early in the relationship that she is consenting, or may even have initiated the contact. It is only later, when the relationship sours, or she discovers that she was not the only one, that realization sets in, with all its attendant pain. The dynamic is similar to that of the incest victim, and to the extent that the pastor is considered to be pater familias, an incest analogy is not far off the mark. Adult victims of clergy sexual exploitation, 96% of them women, have frequently experienced prior sexual abuse.

It is important to be clear that we are not talking about an "affair", which implies mutual consent. And adultery, though it is often present, is not the issue. The issue is abuse of power.

WHEN A VICTIM COMES FORWARD

Frequently, a victim will have spent long years in therapy before understanding what really happened to him or her. It is common for a victim to get far enough along in a process of recovery to be a survivor, and then to want to face the offender and the church.

The process of helping a victim come forward will be greatly expedited if a denomination has available trained victim's advocates. The role of the advocate is to be there for the victim, to assist each person to prepare their case, and bring it forward. By being also familiar with the local judicatory officials and church polity, the advocate can act as a liaison. Well-chosen advocates will have credibility in the system, but it will be clear to everyone that the advocate is working primarily for the victim. A good advocacy program can, in many cases, avoid the involvement of lawyers, although a victim must feel free to consult with a lawyer at any time.

DEVELOPING A CORPS OF VICTIM'S ADVOCATES

Both male and female advocates should be trained, although there is usually more demand for women advocates. The first step is screening, nominating, training, and discerning after training who will be official designated advocates. Once this is done, the availability of the advocate coordinator's name should be made known through many communications vehicles, and posted in every church.

After screening nominees to be trained, they will need at least one full week of training. The trainers will then help select those best suited to be advocates. A person who is going to work with victims of sexual abuse may also be a survivor, but the expectation is that one would be well along in a recovery process, so that personal issues would not interfere unduly with the ability to be present for others in a supportive way. One way to safe-guard against this is to offer short-term therapy to advocates who find their own issues re-surfacing as a result of doing the work. The on-going cases require close supervision and periodic evaluation. Advocates will be taught the necessity for self-care. Additional training and workshops are vital.

Victim's advocates should not be expected to work for nothing. The church's tradition of using the labor of women for little or no pay can be another way of discounting the feminine, and as such, must not now be replicated in righting the wrongs of sexual misconduct. In fact, done right, this will be a relatively expensive program. However, the expense of doing business this way pales when we think of the alternatives. One victim who doesn't feel well served by the church in the hands of one enthusiastic lawyer could make the costs of developing an advocacy group look like loose change. It must be said that sometimes the best of advocacy programs will not satisfy a victim, and that a few will ultimately end up in litigation. Our

experience over an eight year period,, however, is that the vast majority of cases can be handled completely by advocates.

When looking for people to be trained as advocates, the following qualities are important: an understanding of boundary, power and authority issues, an understanding of the Church as institution and community, an understanding of family systems. Prospective advocates should have done extensive work on their own family of origin issues, especially regarding addiction, abuse, and exploitation. One should have knowledge of the subtleties of seduction and be able to exhibit good personal boundaries.

GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD PROCESS

In the process of coming forward, the initial contact should ideally be made through a designated coordinator. At any rate, once this system is in place, an advocate should not begin working on a case without first being in contact with the coordinator. It is important to publish stories of how the process works. It is assumed that a district or diocese will have simultaneously developed policies and procedures for bringing forward and resolving cases. It is very important that church officials be clear with both the victim and the advocate about what is involved in due process. For example, knowing that there are informal and formal disciplinary processes is helpful. Speaking to the Bishop is quite different from testifying before an Ecclesiastical Court. The former course is often all that is necessary, but the latter could become a possibility, and will be much harder on the victim.

IMMEDIATE CARE

A call comes in to the diocesan office, either directly, or by referral, or by a person anonymously seeking information. The caller needs to know that she or he is speaking to the right person. It is important NOT to let the caller tell their story to anyone who cannot help.

The advocate should identify herself and her role: " My name is -----and I have been trained to listen to stories pertaining to sexual exploitation, harassment and/or abuse". Further identification of the advocate involves clarifying that one is not an attorney or therapist or spiritual director. If an advocate is ordained, it is necessary to reveal that fact. If one who is ordained has an official position in the same system, that must be revealed. It is best if an advocate doesn't have such a position, as there could be a conflict of interest. This is why it is advisable to train and use advocates ecumenically or regionally, so the possible boundary difficulties will be minimized.

Identify the support network that the caller already has in place. Does that person have a therapist, spiritual director, attorney? The advocate may be the first person hearing the story,

but should try not to be the only one.

Any phone conversations between the advocate and the client will have to take place in a way that is safe for the client. Frequently the advocate will be negotiating times and places for phone or in-person conversations that ensure that safety. It is important to assure the client of confidentiality, unless minors are victims, and state law mandates reporting. If this is so, that needs to be understood as well.

A person coming forward is free to speak anonymously, but if she or he wants the Church to take action, eventually it will be necessary to: 1. Have their name be known to the alleged offender and the church leader. 2. Make charges in writing, and 3. Have a preliminary meeting with the person who has ecclesiastical authority.

The advocate must make it clear to the victim that she or he is willing to help, but that they cannot "fix it". The full story must come out before alternatives are suggested. Exact times, dates, places are not so important in the first telling as is listening to the flow of the story and paying close attention to the feelings. The advocate will need to guard against making judgement or promises that she or he is unable to keep. Each church system handles these cases in its own unique way, and on-going child abuse is handled quite differently from a twenty-year-old sexual exploitation case. Also, the extent of the known abuse is taken into account; a one-time slip is a very different matter than evidence emerging of a predatory pattern of behavior.

There are five basic ways an advocate should respond to callers. The five WORDS were developed by the Illusion Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota. They were given to Margo by Nancy Beal and they are:

- BELIEVE - what they are telling you.
- AFFIRM - what and how they are telling you.
- SUPPORT - them in ways they might articulate a need.
- EMPOWER - them to do what they need.
- REFER - them to a therapist, spiritual director, attorney, police, child protection, etc.

DON'T make promises you can't keep. DON'T put words into their mouths. DON'T assume reactions or responses. Some people don't cry or get angry right away.

During conversation, the advocate should try to assess the emotional stability of the client. Is she or he in despair and in danger of trying suicide? Advocates will be trained to listen to the subtle clues people give and to do a suicide prevention check. Knowledge of resources in the community to deal with emergencies will be important.

The advocate must believe the client, in order to be a good advocate. In those rare cases where this is not possible, then

the advocate should take herself off the case. It might be noted here that the stance of church officials will at the outset be somewhat different. They must take the story seriously, and let the victim know that they are doing so; however, until charges are brought and an investigation is conducted by the church, as well as input from an extensive evaluation of the alleged offender is obtained, it will be necessary for officials to suspend their judgement in the course of allowing due process. This will need to be explained to the victim.

It is the job of church officials to investigate the charges, not the job of the advocate. The advocate needs enough details of the story to truthfully be able to say: I believe you. It was not your fault. It was wrong. This has happened to others and you are not alone. How may I help you?

The advocate will give to her client a vocabulary for what has happened. Abuse, exploitation, and harassment are not interchangeable words. Some additional things to consider are, should one keep notes, and record times and dates? This is somewhat tricky because if the case ends up in the courts, there is the possibility that such notes would be subpoenaed. On the other hand, notes help to keep clarity and can be very useful. State laws vary around the issues of confidentiality and mandated reporting. The advocate must have supervision and be able to debrief; this is essential.

The advocate will spend a good deal of her time in conversation with church officials. She will frequently be the liaison between officials and the victim, and probably will be present when the victim comes forward to tell her story. Church officials will be asking the victim what she wants to have happen, and the advocate will have helped her prepare her statement, which will include an answer to that question. The advocate will be reporting back to the victim the progress of the investigation, and will warn her at the outset that these things take time.

Some other things to keep in mind are that the conversation should stick to the story at hand, and that there are some myths that need to be broken, such as that there are always large money settlements, or that the Church does not want to hear.

The victim has at her core suffered a major spiritual trauma
- soul stealing or soul slaying are ways some writers have put it - so don't presume that victims want to pray, or hear biblical stories, be told they are forgiven, or just to "forgive and forget", or to "gird up their loins".

Make clients aware of other resources and options, such as reading, individual or group therapy, getting an attorney, filing criminal or civil charges, reporting to appropriate agencies or professional organizations. There is always the option of doing nothing. Listing of options helps to clarify what the victim's advocate role is, and is not. The advocate will take no steps

without the client's permission.

INTERMEDIATE CARE

If the victim so chooses, work will begin with family members. Parents of child victims are frequently as affected, sometimes even more affected, than was child who was a direct victim. Sometimes it seems the parents take on a great deal of the pain, so that their child does not have to deal with it, even after becoming an adult. One of the outcomes of the victim's eventual coming forward may well be that parents are at last able to let go. This same dynamic also appears in some couples, with the wronged spouse carrying most of the pain, and even being the one to eventually report the abuse.

Family members will need to find their own support, in a network that is separate from the advocacy. They may need help in determining what they need, and to be pointed in the direction of resources. Typically, and justifiably, the trust level toward the Church is at rock-bottom. A lot of remedial work with families is essential for the victim's family to begin the healing process.

The timing of the process invariably takes longer than anyone expects. Investigation of the charges, evaluation of the alleged offender and arriving at a fair judgement is a lengthy procedure. In the course of events, the victim needs to understand that she may be asked many difficult questions of clarification, especially if the case should go to ecclesiastical trial. The alleged offender may well minimize the events, deny everything, or put a very different spin on his version of events. One of the most difficult aspects of being a victim's advocate is trying to warn the client about such possible events, without making her feel that the church doesn't want her to come forward, or that she should just go away.

The advocate will monitor the process of the investigation and report back to the client at regular intervals. Once again, we note that it is important for the advocate to know and have good boundaries.

LONG-TERM CARE

At some point during the process of resolving a case, the victim may change her mind about what she wants to have happen. It is not at all uncommon for a person who is just beginning to deal with her victimization to come forward with requests that the alleged offender get help and be prevented from being able to victimize others. If the victimization is recent and on-going, she will also want the behavior toward her to cease. Women who become victims of clergy sexual exploitation frequently think so little of themselves that they can not ask for anything for themselves. As the process continues, however, many women begin to tap into their rage; this is a normal part of the healing process, and needs to be understood as such. When anger and rage

surface, then victims become very impatient with the perceived slowness of the church's response. Then they may want the offender to suffer appropriate consequences. Sometimes this reaction is delayed until years after the initial coming forward.

It is often very difficult for victims to understand how the church can continue to support and reward the offender. Generous severance packages and access to pension funds are particular sticking points. It is hard to believe that true justice is being done when the most severe consequence the offender suffers is the loss of his job and perhaps being removed from the ranks of the ordained. The more powerful the cleric is in the system, the more difficult it is to get a just outcome which will satisfy the victim. The current canonical process in many churches was designed to deal primarily with charges of heresy, in those innocent days before we had a clear understanding of the utter devastation which predatory sexual behavior wreaks on victims. The pain is greatly compounded if the church keeps the whole thing quiet in order to protect the clergyperson. The victim has a right to expect that her privacy will be honored if she desires; the same protection does not need to be provided for the offender.

And yet, even with an improved canonical process providing due process for the alleged offender and putting some teeth into the discipline meted out to the offender, a truly just consequence for the offender may have to continue to come through the civil or criminal courts, if relevant.

Some of the other long-term needs of the victim may be a spiritual director, a therapist, and a congregation that feels safe. Some victims will never be able to return to the church, and certainly this aspect of recovery should not be rushed or assumed. Extreme sensitivity in this matter is required.

Some long-range follow-up is advisable, and the survivor might be asked to report back the progress at certain intervals. A survivor always needs to feel that he or she can call back at any time. If another case involving the same offender surfaces, this may trigger old memories and feelings, and require additional contact.

Sometimes people who have emerged successfully from this experience can help others later, perhaps becoming victim's advocates themselves. It is important to be sure that the survivor is strong enough to be able to do this well. Supervision and support would be crucial.

CONDITIONS WHICH MUST BE MET FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE TO RECONCILE WITH THE OFFENDER

By definition, Abuse is sexual contact or other abuse which happens within the scope of a clergyperson's sacred trust and with any member of his congregation, not just minors. There is no such thing as consenting adults in such situations, even if the person who was abused felt differently about the contact at the time, and to some extent welcomed or initiated the contact. It is important that all parties be clear about this issue prior to any meeting which may take place.

Reconciliation and forgiveness only happens at the end of a long and painful process for all involved. It is sometimes tempting for people to try to get closure before it is appropriate, especially if, as church people, they feel compelled to forgive or seek forgiveness before everyone is truly ready.

Even though a survivor's continued recovery must not depend on getting an apology from the offender, a genuine reconciliation can be tremendously helpful for the ongoing healing of both survivor and offender.

THE PRIMARY TIME-TABLE IS THAT OF THE VICTIM, WHO WILL BY THE TIME OF THE MEETING HAVE BECOME A SURVIVOR

If a survivor chooses to have a meeting for reconciliation, That person will have been in therapy for a long enough period to be strong, and no longer giving over any of her power to the offender. It is only through this process of empowerment that reconciliation becomes a possibility. This is a judgement which the survivor and her/his therapist will determine together. It is always the survivor's right to decline to meet with the offender.

The offender will have been in many years of therapy after admitting his actions were clearly wrong. He will be able to understand the shattering effect of his abusive behavior on the victim, and to take full responsibility for his actions. He will not employ other defenses, such as "I was ill, or under the influence of alcohol." He will be able to offer a genuine "making amends". This means that he will not be minimizing his behavior, or issuing a non-apology such as, "I am sorry if you feel that I harmed you".

THE PROCESS

If originally there was more than one victim, the offender will usually meet with one survivor at a time. This is probably less overwhelming for him. In addition, all survivors who were direct victims come to the point of reconciliation with different timetables and needs. If a group of secondary victims, such as those in a congregation wish to confront the offender together, this is appropriate, as their issues are both individual and

communal.

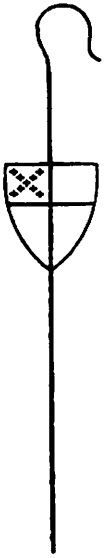
Each of the primary participants will have his or her therapist present, plus a third party to facilitate the process.

The survivor will first review with the offender what the events were leading up to the abuse, and the abusive events themselves. She or he will be able to tell the offender the effects of the abuse, and describe the course of his or her healing process. The offender may respond, but may not challenge the facts. The survivor then tells the offender what he or she needs to heal. Often the survivor will express a need for an apology. Part of the survivor's empowerment is knowing what she or he needs, and being able to ask for it. If this happens, the offender must not make excuses for the behavior, and must be willing to express contrition. If the offender is not prepared to participate within the above parameters, the meeting should not take place.

The survivor is allowed to take a break at any time during the meeting.

The meeting may open with prayer if all parties agree. Prayer is sometimes not possible for victims of clergy abuse. However, further prayers or other liturgical or symbolic acts, including the granting of absolution, are only appropriate at the end of the meeting if the outcome is judged satisfactory by both parties. Then, and only then, are repentance and forgiveness - reconciliation - possible.

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OFFICE OF PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PRIMARY ELEMENTS IN A 'SYSTEMS APPROACH' TO PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO CLERGY SEXUAL MISBEHAVIOR

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I. INTRODUCTION

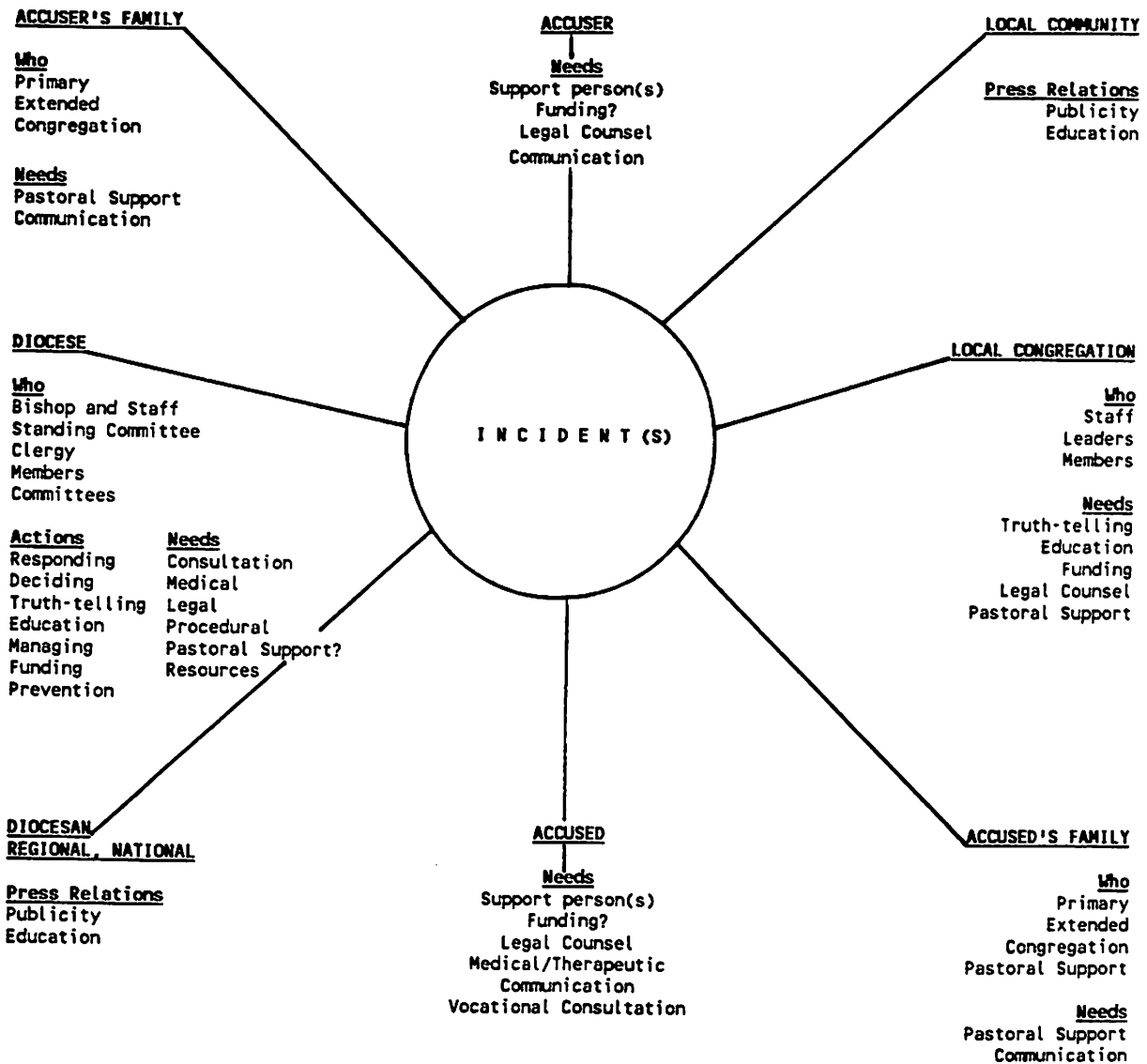
There are many resources available in the Episcopal Church and elsewhere for helping the various concerned parties address the important issue of clergy sexual misbehavior. Many dioceses have in place or are working on guidelines and standards for clergy ethical behavior. Many other denominations have done and are doing good work in this field. A number of institutes and educational centers of one kind or another have produced very good educational materials often incorporating video-tapes and other teaching aids. There is an increasing number of publications and books on the market, many of which are very helpful. A partial list of some of the best of these resources is addended to this paper.

The purpose of this paper is to offer, especially to diocesan and other Episcopal institutional leaders, an overview in summary form, of the various elements in a total systems approach to dealing with clergy sexual misbehavior. The problem is itself a "system problem". Piecemeal attempts to address it will not be very successful since every person involved in most incidents of clergy misbehavior is closely connected to other persons and communities. And it is obvious that human sexuality is a central ingredient in all human thinking, feeling and acting. Broad educational efforts are required for prevention as well as effective crisis response.

The thought of providing all the elements mentioned in this overview may seem daunting, especially to smaller dioceses and institutions which will not have all the resources available to them that some larger institutions may. This is an enormous and far-reaching matter with wide implications for every aspect of church life. Even larger institutions may not be able to have all these elements in place. The national church, the Church Pension Group and other individuals are in many cases able to consult, support and provide assistance to strengthen local efforts so that all persons involved may be served as well as possible. This national support is one important dimension of a 'systems approach' to these issues.

It is also the case that having a basic conceptual model of a systems approach will help an institution see where the holes and needs are in their own systems and where particular assistance may be advisable. Good systemic management of these matters does minimize damage to persons in specific instances, and there is evidence that a systemic approach also aids in incident prevention and the maintenance of a climate of "health and wellness" amongst clergy.

**ELEMENTS IN A SYSTEMS RESPONSE
TO CLERGY SEXUAL MISBEHAVIOR**



NATIONAL CONSULTATION RESOURCES

Church Pension Group
(800) 223-6602

Office of Pastoral Development
(207) 846-6564

Partnerships Department
Episcopal Church Center
(800) 334-7626 x-5340

Individuals and Groups with Special Expertise
(Available on Request)

Education and Training Resources
(Available on Request)

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Health Care
Legal Costs
Support for Care-givers
Who Pays? Why?

SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Social Theories
Political Climates
Individual/Society

HISTORY/EXPERIENCE

Individual
Familial
Congregational

LEGAL CONTEXT

Criminal Justice System
Civil Law
Canon Law

SEXUAL ETHICS

Women's & Men's Issues
Social Climate, Mores
Roles, Power, Structures

MEDICAL/THERAPEUTIC ISSUES

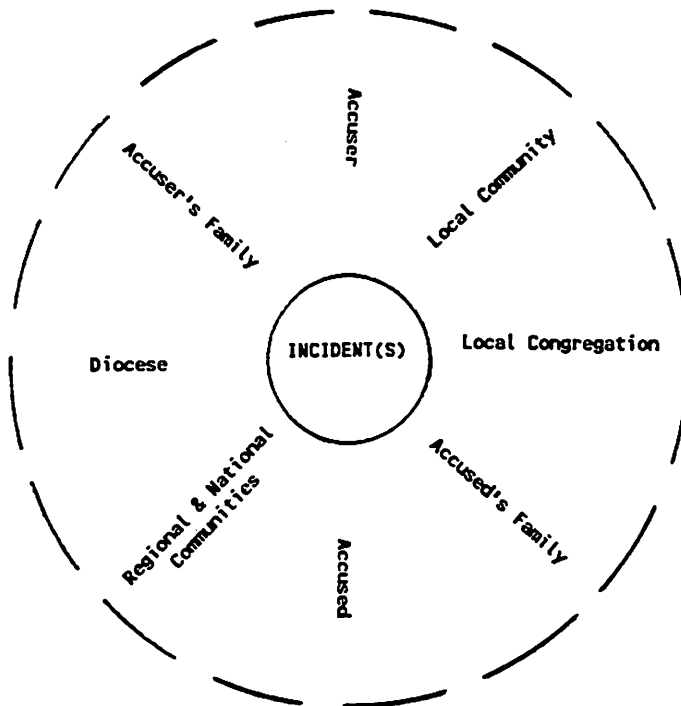
Theories of Personality
Theories of Diagnosis
Theories of Treatment
Therapist Competence

ROLE OF THE ORDAINED

Meaning of Ministry
Clergy-Lay Relations
Christian Community Life
Clergy Groups, Morale

POWER & INFLUENCE

What is it?
Who has it?
How is it used?



SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES

Each element influences the whole.
Each element influences every other element.
Each element influences every individual,
and vice-versa, to varying degrees.

II. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The heart and foundation of effective education, prevention and response to clergy sexual misbehavior is a clear, concise, well-publicized and understood set of policies and procedures. There are many samples available, some considerably better than others. Each diocese should develop or adapt its own set. This developing and adapting should be done with the participation of clergy and laity, in an open and public manner. They should not be "laid on" the clergy by the bishop or an administrative group, no matter how well intentioned. Experience clearly indicates that clergy cooperation is much higher when they are given the opportunity to understand the purpose and need for guidelines and procedures, and to have a hand in developing them.

It should be noted that guidelines and procedures are not intended to "target" clergy. When well done, they protect clergy, as well as all others potentially involved in the issues.

These guidelines and procedures should include:

1. Definitions: Sexual abuse, harassment, exploitation. Comment could also be made on such terms as victim, accuser, survivor, perpetrator, accused, etc. Such terminology is already in a period of flux, and a common understanding in a given system is helpful. Attention should be paid to any definitions of these terms in state law.

2. A statement indicating that clergy sexual abuse in its various forms is wrong and will be responded to when discovered or when a credible accusation is made against a clergyperson. The relationship between sexual abuse, betrayal of pastoral trust and abuse of clerical authority should be commented on.

3. The principle of "truth-telling" - as much as possible, balanced against potential injury to innocent persons - should be upheld. The covering up of clergy misbehavior is not an acceptable practice. It is also important to comment, however briefly, on such important principles as:

Commitment to justice-in-love for all involved

The over-all, ultimate aim of reconciliation and forgiveness, when and if possible

4. A well publicized procedure for reporting clergy sexual misbehavior, for victims and other concerned persons should be included, with contact names and phone numbers.

Many institutions will have victim's support persons available to assist persons who may have been offended to come forward. These are available on a wider than diocesan basis, also.

5. A set of procedures that will be followed when responding to accusations, including:

- a. Made in writing, if possible
- b. Taken seriously, responded to
- c. Made known to the accused, "due process"
- d. Procedures if admitted by the accused

For the accused

For family of accused

For Congregation/peers of accused

For Victim and his/her primary family

- e. Procedures if denied

Same elements as above

6. A general endorsement of the rights of accuser and accused to legal counsel should be considered. Same for the bishop and local church, if advised.

7. A statement about clergy responsibility for self-care, including any diocesan requirements and resources toward this end, should be included.

8. A brief mention of the types of possible Canonical discipline may be helpful:

Pastoral directive

Inhibition

Suspension

Deposition

Resignation

9. Procedures, if the charges are found false or unsubstantiated, should be outlined.

10. A statement regarding procedures for recommending clergy for new positions, full disclosure, etc. should be made.

11. The bishop's role as pastor to accuser, clergy and the whole diocesan system (not to the clergy only) could be briefly addressed.

12. A statement about diocesan insurance coverage could be summarized.

13. A statement of understanding for all clergy to assent to should be considered - or minimally that they have read the diocesan guidelines and procedures.

**** Note:** This document should be carefully examined by the Chancellor. Opinions may vary regarding the inclusion of some of these elements.

III. A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO RESPONSE AND PREVENTION OF CLERGY SEXUAL MISBEHAVIOR FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE SEVERAL PRIMARY PERSONS AND ELEMENTS INVOLVED

A. From the perspective of the accuser, victim, survivor* (See vocabulary note at end), desirable resources to have in place or available include:

- Diocesan Policies and Procedures
- Trained Victims Support Persons, male and female
 - Locally and/or regionally geographically distributed
 - Clear guidelines and purpose statements
 - Financial support
 - Ongoing support and training
- Education resources for bishops and other supervisors especially regarding "victim's issues", sensitivity to needs, etc.
- Reconciling procedures and knowledgeable persons
- Policies regarding financial support for victim counselling. Funding available and accessible
- Personal, pastoral contact/support for family members, if desired
- Access to legal counsel, if necessary

B. From the perspective of the accused:

- Diocesan Policies and Procedures
- National "Centers of Excellence" for evaluation, treatment plans, consultation for bishops and others

- Medical/insurance policies nationally coordinated and distributed. Coordination with ECUSA and The Church Pension Group. Dioceses not insured under the Medical Trust will need to be sure of their particular coverage.
- Competent local professionals for long and short-term counselling and care, including primary family members
- Access to legal counsel, if necessary
- Direct personal/pastoral support in addition to contact from the bishop and/or staff. Available for family also.
- General policies regarding "settlements" if removed from job. Model plans for severance.
- Outplacement and career counselling resources

C. From the perspective of the bishop and other senior staff persons:

- Diocesan Policies and Procedures
- A variety of national and local education/training resources. Broad encouragement for participation.
- A variety of consulting resources - known and available:
 - Medical/therapeutic
 - Legal/canonical
 - Procedural
 - Insurance, medical and liability
 - Personal
 - Educational
- A "knowledgeable" chancellor
- A response/investigatory team and process
- Trained pastoral consultation, persons, and teams available, especially for work in congregations

D. From the perspective of other diocesan clergy and laity:

- Diocesan policies and procedures
- Regular, required education/training for clergy
- General education for laity

- Clergy support/wellness training on personal and familial issues.
 "Encouragement" toward full participation from bishop
 Clergy personal support groups, resources
- Access to confidential counselling/therapy
- "Letters of understanding" when entering diocese or pre-ordination.
- Education on issues, in seminaries
- Clarity from bishop in his/her stance on these issues

E. From the perspective of the local congregation:

- Diocesan Policies and Procedures
- General lay education/information on issues
- Trained individuals/team of consultants to congregations and leaders
 Support for Wardens and Vestry when incidents occur
- Support for "After Pastors"
- Specially knowledgeable and trained interim clergy
- Access to legal advice/counsel
- Access to pastoral support for victims, known and unknown
- Access to support from bishop and staff
- Assistance with publicity and communication issues

F. Additional desirable resources often necessary for a complete systems approach:

- Persons knowledgeable about dealing with the press - local, diocesan and national
- Training, education and resourcing for chancellors
- Training for Commissions on Ministry, especially regarding screening and testing of aspirants. Close contact between COM and the screening professionals as to what is expected and can be provided

- Support for congregations in the calling process regarding "asking the hard questions"
- Policies on record-keeping and recommendations for future employers
- Educational resources for seminaries and seminarians
- Policies for camps, schools, conference centers and lay leaders in general

***Note: Vocabulary and terminology**

In this area, as in many others, current vocabulary is not adequate to convey the complexities and nuances that are often involved in a given situation. However, the following terms are in general current use:

Accuser - a person bringing a charge against a clergyperson before the charge is substantiated.

Accused - the object of the above.

Victim - one who is personally impacted in negative ways by inappropriate clergy sexual behavior and the misuse of the pastoral office; the issues are chiefly unresolved or unaddressed. (There are primary and secondary victims in most cases.)

Survivor, recovering/recovered person - one for whom the impact of clergy sexual misbehavior is being or has been resolved. Helping an offended person toward this goal is a fundamental objective.

Offender, perpetrator - a clergyperson who has admitted charges, or against whom charges have been substantiated.

There is, unfortunately, no adequate term in general use to describe an offender who is in substantial recovery and renewal, vis-a-vis his/her own issues, with respect to the person offended and with the whole Christian community. To help offending clergy toward this goal is a fundamental objective.

IV. ESPECIALLY COMPLEX DECISIONS

General policies may address these in part, but national experience indicates these areas as particularly difficult in terms of effective management; special consultation may be advisable

1. Whether or not and when to remove an accused priest - even temporarily - from duties.

In general this is more likely to be advisable at an early stage when the accusations are particularly credible, arise from more than one source, or involve potentially criminal charges (as in pedophilia).

2. When to tell congregational Wardens, leaders (and eventually the congregation) of an accusation of their priest.

In general, as soon as a serious charge is made. Confidentiality can be requested until "probable cause" is discovered. Congregational leaders should have a hand in deciding when and how to notify the congregation at large.

3. The tension, especially for the bishop between taking accusations seriously and not "presuming guilt".

Important to understand that the first does not automatically equal the second, for both accuser and accused. Important to note that most suits come from mishandling of the accusations, not from the initiating clergy behavior.

4. Possible alternative action if the accuser is not willing to put charges in writing - and they are credible and serious.

There are several; all are quite weak.

5. Clinical evaluation increasingly does not tell "what happened", when charges are denied. This makes bishop's "judging" more difficult. This is one of the most complex problems bishops may face, especially in the face of credible charges.

6. The tension between the priest's "right to privacy" (if any), the clinical demand for confidentiality and the bishop's need to know what happened, and what is happening, with the priest.

Some clinicians will no long divulge the results of therapy, even with the client's permission.

7. When, what and how to tell the spouse and family of an accused priest.

Many variables. They do need support. It's difficult to provide it in many cases. The diocese and bishop is often perceived as the enemy.

8. Whether to tell a priest to bring a support person to a session where he/she first hears a charge. Should the bishop have a support person present?

Probably "yes" in both cases, not necessarily a lawyer! Care should be taken not to press the accused clergy person for an immediate response to the charges.

Clergy who have received charges (both substantiated and not substantiated) indicate that the period right after hearing the charge for the first time is an especially difficult one. Self-destructive impulses are not uncommon, as well as the temptation to act in a hostile manner toward the accuser. Personal and/or therapeutic support should be offered.

9. The need to truth tell in a congregation vs protecting victims and other innocent people (especially children).

No accusers should be identified; tell what can be told and why some things can't; make clear that all may not be known, especially at the outset of an incident.

10. The accused's right to legal counsel and the need to respond pastorally to accusers and congregations. One complicates or may actually prevent the other.

11. The bishop's role as administrator/judge and pastor to the accused, the accuser and the larger church system.

The bishop cannot be first-line pastor to the clergy or the accuser. Other resources are necessary. Many clergy in crisis expect the bishop to be their pastor only.

12. The bishop's (and other staff persons) need for personal support around their own issues when dealing with these cases.

They are usually very stressful! There is a lot of free-floating anger which often is focussed on the bishop -- even when cases are well-handled.

13. How far to go when "investigating" suspicions that are well-founded but on which evidence is lacking; or when accused flatly denies otherwise credible charges.

A very difficult "double-bind" for all. The church is not in the investigating business, however. Generally speaking, it responds to accusations only. There may be exceptions.

14. Who should keep in contact with the accuser/victim, and when?

Probably not the bishop alone. Accusers do have a need to know what is going on in general, and experience indicates that they greatly appreciate being kept informed.

There will probably be a feeling that things are not going fast enough to suit them. There are also some requests that victims make that may not be able to be responded to immediately, if at all. They may feel that the bishop has more authority over an accused clergyperson than is actually the case.

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March, 1993

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Bible for Young Christians
The Old Testament

By A.-M. Cocagnac and
Rosemary Haughton

Illustrations by Jacques Lescanff

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK

1967

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THE CREATION

How God made light and sea and land

In the beginning God made light, and he made the stuff of the world.

He said, "Let there be light!" and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he said, "We will call the light 'Day' and the darkness 'Night'." And so this became the first day in the world, with an evening and a morning.

Now the stuff of the world was like fire, it was liquid, like burning waters. God cooled down this fiery stuff until it was solid, and could turn into rocks, and into the metals that we find in the earth and in the stars. This was like a second day. On the earth the water called Sea drew back and let the land appear. God rejoiced because the Sea

was so beautiful. Then he planted live things on the land, grasses and fruit-trees and all the plants that bear the seeds of their own kind. God rejoiced because he had planted life on earth, and this was like a third day.

The stars already shone in the sky. They were balls of fire that lit up the night. The sun gave light to the earth, and even at night the moon showed that the sun was still there. So now the sun made morning and evening on earth, and this was like God's fourth day. The heavens cry out the glory of God and the sky shows forth the work of his hands. Each day tells the news to the next day and the night gives the message to the next night.



How living things multiplied in sea and land

God said, "Let the Sea and Land bring forth living creatures. Let the waters swim with them, and let birds fly above the Land." And so it happened. At God's will great serpents were born in the sea, and strange fish. In the sky flew all sorts of birds, of many different kinds. God blessed the fish and the birds and he said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply and fill all the waters of the Sea, and the Sky." And life spread all through the Sky, and on the Land, as God commanded. This was like a fifth day for the world.

God said, "Let the Land also bring forth living creatures. Let there be huge beasts and little ones, some to be always wild and others that may be tamed." God knew that the earth would bring forth many kinds of

creatures ; big ones and little ones, beautiful ones and strange ones, gentle ones and fierce ones.

Many of these kinds of creatures still exist but some did not survive. But the earth kept the memory of them for us. In the very oldest rocks we find the bones or fossils of creatures that died out long ago.

God said to all these animals, "I shall give you all plants that bear seeds, wherever they grow on earth. And all trees with seeds in their fruit besides. These shall be your food. Wild beasts, birds in the sky and creeping things on the ground ; all of them shall have the green plants to be their food." And God saw the beginning of all these kinds of creatures and he loved them. And he saw that it was very good.



Bless the Lord, my soul!
Lord God, how great you are,
clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in light as in a cloak!

You make springs gush forth in the valleys
they flow in between the hills.

They give drink to all beasts of the field,
the wild asses quench their thirst.

To their banks come the birds of the air,
in the branches they sing their song.

The trees of the Lord drink water,
the cedars he planted on Lebanon :
there the birds build their nests.

On the tree-top the stork has her home.

The goats find a home in the mountains
and rabbits hide in the rocks.

You made the moon to mark the months ;
the sun knows the time for its setting.

When you spread the darkness it is night
and all the beasts of the forest creep forth.

The young lions roar for their prey
and ask their food from God.

You give it, they gather it up.

You open your hand, they have their fill.

You hide your face, they are terrified.

You take back your breath, they die.

You send out your breath, they are made new
and you renew the face of the earth.

There is the sea, huge and wide,
with its moving swarms past counting,
living things great and small.

The great ships are moving there
and the monsters you made for your play.

All of these look to you
to give them their food in due season.



How God made man to be like himself

God was glad to see life spreading over the earth. Each animal knew the best way for its own kind to live and have young ones so that its kind should continue.

In many different ways life sprang up and increased on earth.

Then God said, "It is time to make man : He shall be wiser than any animal, when I speak my word to him he will reply. I shall give him a heart that can love, for he shall be like me. He shall be my likeness. He shall rule over the earth and the sky, and over all the animals."

As God willed it was done. Man came forth from the earth, the same earth that had made so many plants grow and on which so many kinds of animals had already been born.

That is why in the Bible the man is called Adam. It means : Come from earth.

But God said, "If the man is all alone he will be sad. I will make him a helper and companion of the same kind as himself. When he sees her he will say, 'This one is truly bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.' She shall be called 'Eve', which means : She was taken from man."

That is why when a man marries we can say, "He is leaving his father and mother, now he and his wife together will make one single thing."

The man and the woman were glad to be alive. They were happy in their nakedness. They looked at each other with love.

God blessed the man and the woman and said, "Come together in marriage ; have children, so that the earth may be filled. For the human race shall rule over all creation."

How great is your name, O Lord our God,
through all the earth.

Your majesty is praised above the heavens.
By the mouths of children and of babes
you have found praise to foil your enemy,
to silence the foe and the rebel.

When I see the heavens,
the work of your hands,
the moon and the stars which you arranged,
what is man that you should keep him
in mind,
mortal man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him little less
than a god ;
with glory and honour you crowned him,
gave him power over the works of your
hand,
put all things under his feet.

All of them, sheep and cattle,
yes, even the savage beasts,
birds of the air, and fish
that make their way through the waters.

How great is your name, O Lord our God,
through all the earth!





How man named the animals

God said to the man and the woman, "Rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and the beasts on the land." And he brought the animals to the man to see what he would call them. Each one would have the name he gave it.

So the man gave names to all the animals on earth, the wild ones and the tame ones, too. Wild animals are called by their kinds, so we say, "that is a wolf" or "that is a lion". But we like to give tame animals names of their own as well. God allowed Adam to name the animals to show that man has power over the beasts. But God did not tell his own name to man for a long time, in case man might think that gave him power over God.

In this way the Creator of the world gave

man a share in ruling it. Man was to be like a son to God, he would inherit something of God's power and wisdom, so that he could help to make the world beautiful and peaceful.

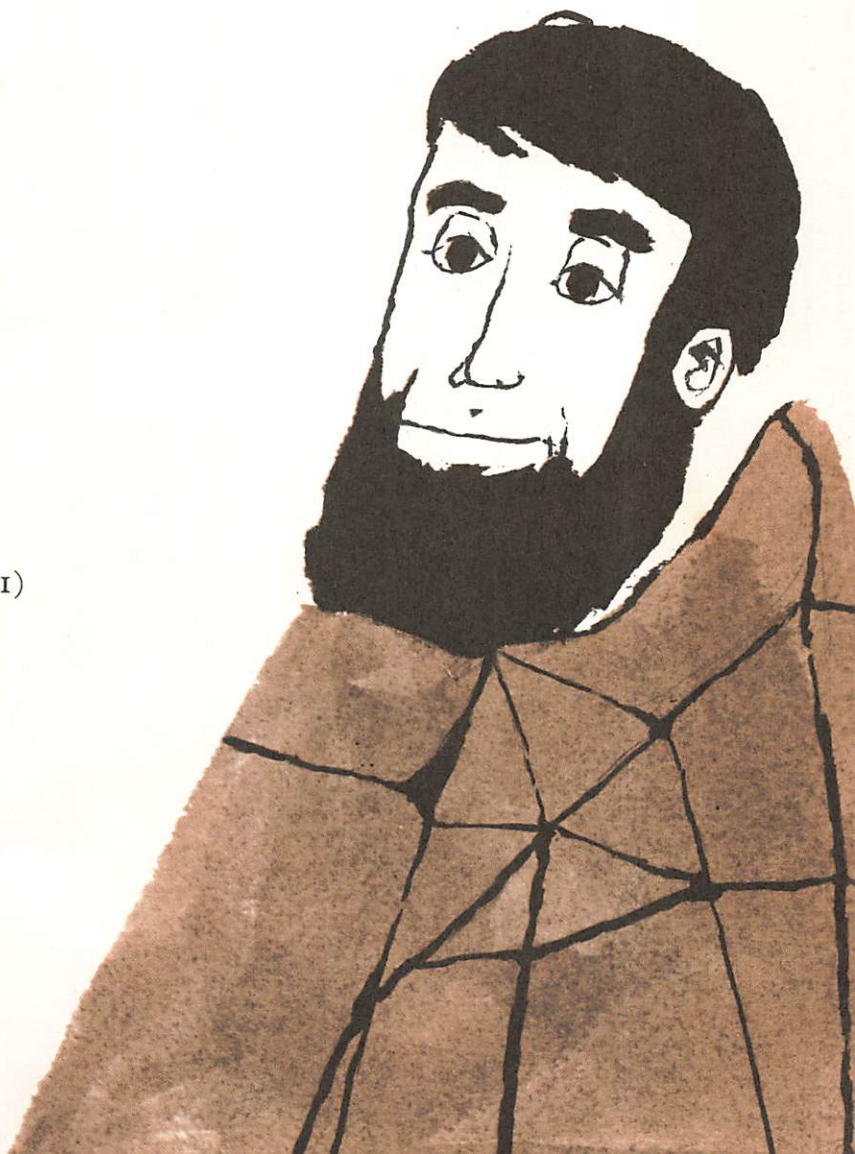
This is how the sky and the land were made, and all creation began.

When we tell the story we say that God rested on the seventh day, and so made the seventh day of the week a day of rest. We don't mean that God was tired, but only that God is greater than his work. Just as God is Lord of creation, so man is greater than his work. He needs one day in the week in which to set his work aside, to remember especially that he is God's son and not a slave, and to thank God for it.

God rested, and man finds rest in God

In God alone is my soul at rest
my help comes from him.
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,
my fortress : I stand firm.
In God is my safety and glory,
the rock of my strength.
Take refuge in God all you people.
Trust him at all times.
Pour out your hearts before him
for God is our refuge.
For God has said only one thing :
only two do I know :
that to God alone belongs power
and to you, Lord, love.

PSALM 62 (61)





THE FALL

How man listened to God's enemy

When God first made earth and sky there were not yet plants in the fields, nor had any green grass appeared, because no rain had yet fallen on the land. Besides, no men had come to dig and cultivate the soil.

In this empty desert God planted an oasis. It was like a huge garden, and it was in the east, in Eden. Out of the ground, at God's word, grew every kind of tree that is beautiful to look at and good for food. There were also two strange trees whose secret only God knew : they were the tree of Life, and the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and then it divided into four streams. The first is called Pishon, and it flows round a land where there are gold and precious stones. The second is called Gihon. The third is the river Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. The fourth is the river Euphrates.

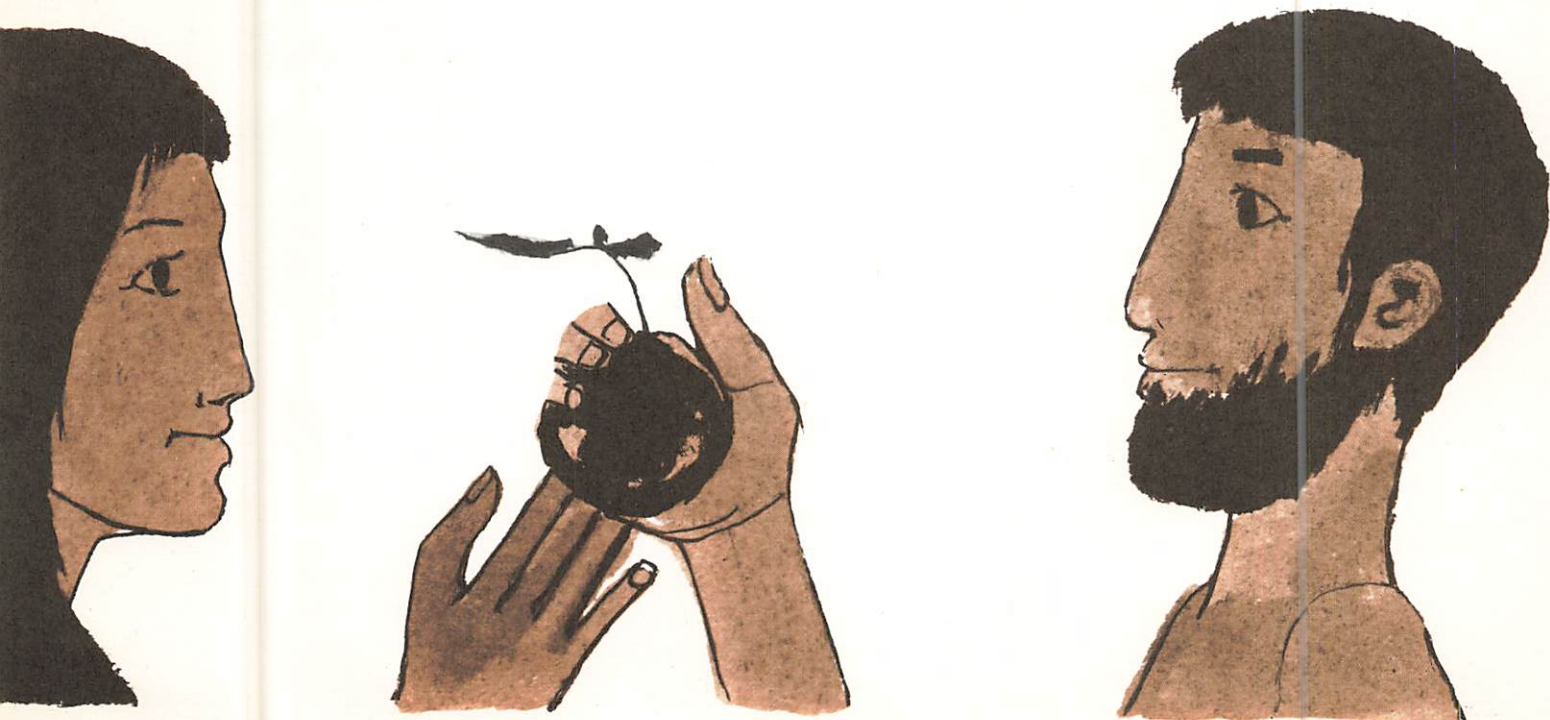
This fruitful garden was called Paradise. God said to the man, "You may eat the fruit of every tree in the garden. But of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you must not eat, for on the day that you eat it you will die." God was showing us that there are secrets too deep for a man's mind to understand. And so men must obey God in the way they use his creation.

God knew that his creatures did not always want to obey him. Even among the angels there were some who had disobeyed him because pride blinded them. The one whom we call Satan was leader of those who rebelled. They envied man's happiness, they wanted to make him disobey God so that he, too, might be punished.

So Satan took the form of a serpent and he came to the woman and said, "Did God say 'you shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" The woman answered, "We may eat the fruit of the trees, but God said, 'You must not eat the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, nor must you touch it, or you will die'." But the serpent said, "No! You will not die. But God knows that when you eat it you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."

The woman looked at the tree and saw that it was good for food, and lovely to look at. She thought it would be wonderful to be as wise as God. So she took some of its fruit and ate it, and she gave some to her husband also.

Then a strange thing happened to them. The world around them which had looked so friendly and good suddenly seemed to have become their enemy. They were afraid, and ashamed, and cold. They felt uneasy and unsafe. So they made themselves clothes, and went and hid among the trees of the garden.



The fool has said in his heart,
"There is no God above."
Their deeds are wicked and evil,
not a good man is left.

From heaven the Lord looked down
on the sons of men,
to see if any are wise,
if any seek God.

All have left the right path,
they have sinned, every one ;
there is not a good man left,
no, not even one.

See how they tremble with fear,
without cause for fear,
for God is with the just.

O that Israel's salvation might come from Sion!
When the Lord sets free his people from their slavery,
then Jacob will be glad, and Israel rejoice.

PSALM 14 (13)





How man knew shame and sin

Presently God called to the man, "Where are you?" The man replied, "I was afraid. I am ashamed, so I hid myself." God said, "Why are you ashamed? Have you eaten the fruit of the forbidden tree?" But the man replied, "The woman you gave me to be with me – she gave me fruit, and I ate it." God said to the woman, "What have you done?" The woman said, "The serpent cheated me, and I ate."

The man tried to find an excuse ; like a disobedient child he put the blame on someone else. But God made him understand that the sin was his own and he must take the consequences. Man wanted to decide for himself what is good and what is bad, without finding out God's will. But only the Lord himself was wise enough to show men the right way to live. Then God said to the serpent :

"You are cursed above all cattle
and above all wild animals.

Upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat,
all the days of your life.

I will put hatred between you and the woman
and between your offspring and hers.
He will crush your head,
and you will try to bite his heel."

God said to the woman :

"You will suffer greatly through having children,
they will bring you sorrow and pain.
You will long for a husband
but you will feel his power over you."

Last of all he said to the man :

"The soil is cursed because of you.
You will labour to get food from it
all the days of your life,
for thorns and thistles will grow on it.
But you shall eat the plants of the field,
by the sweat of your face
you will eat your bread
until you go back to the soil,
for you were taken out of it.
You are dust
and to dust you shall return."



How Adam and Eve were driven out

Then God said to himself, "The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He may try to take the fruit of the tree of Life also, so as to live forever."

So he drove the man and the woman out of the garden to dig the ground as God had ordered. And God put angels with fiery swords outside the garden to guard the way to the tree of life.

So the man and the woman found themselves alone, and they were not like gods at all, but weak and cold and hungry. To get food they had to work hard, and the skins of animals were their clothes. But they had each other as companions, for God had given them to each other, and this part of God's plan was not spoiled by sin.



How evil came into the world

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Adam and Eve had a son, called Cain, and Eve was glad because God had given her a child. And they had another son, too, called Abel.

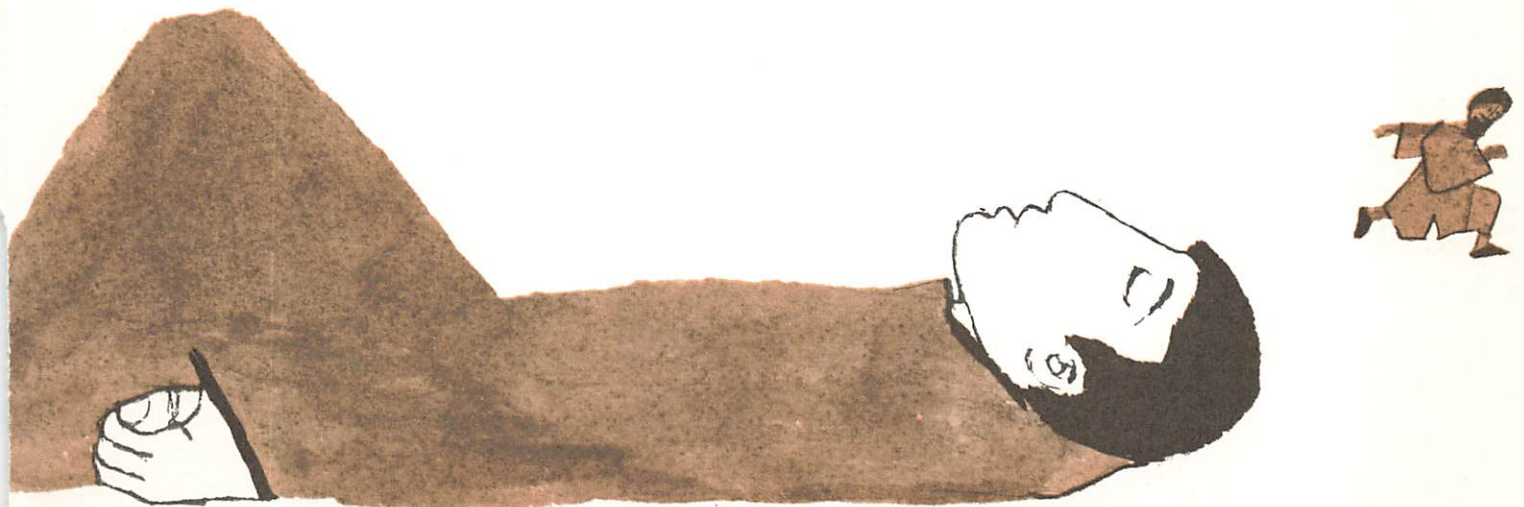
Abel was a shepherd and Cain, the elder, tilled the soil. One day the two brothers made an offering to God ; Cain offered the fruit of the soil and Abel offered lambs from his flock. Cain thought that God must love him and care for him most because he was the elder. But God accepted the offering of Abel, the younger brother, and refused Cain's offering.

So Cain was very angry ; but the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry ? If you do good things you will be accepted by God. But if you don't do good, then you must fight

against your sin or it will be stronger than you."

But Cain would not believe that his enemy was himself, and he hated his brother. He said to him, "Let's go out into the field." And there he killed his brother Abel, because he was angry with God.

God called Cain and said to him, "Where is your brother?" But Cain said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" But God said to him, "What have you done? Your brother's blood is calling to me out of the earth where you spilled it, and now the earth that you have tilled will be a curse to you and not a blessing, for you will wander a stranger with no home." So Cain, who had spoiled God's gift of life, went away to suffer the punishment of this first crime.





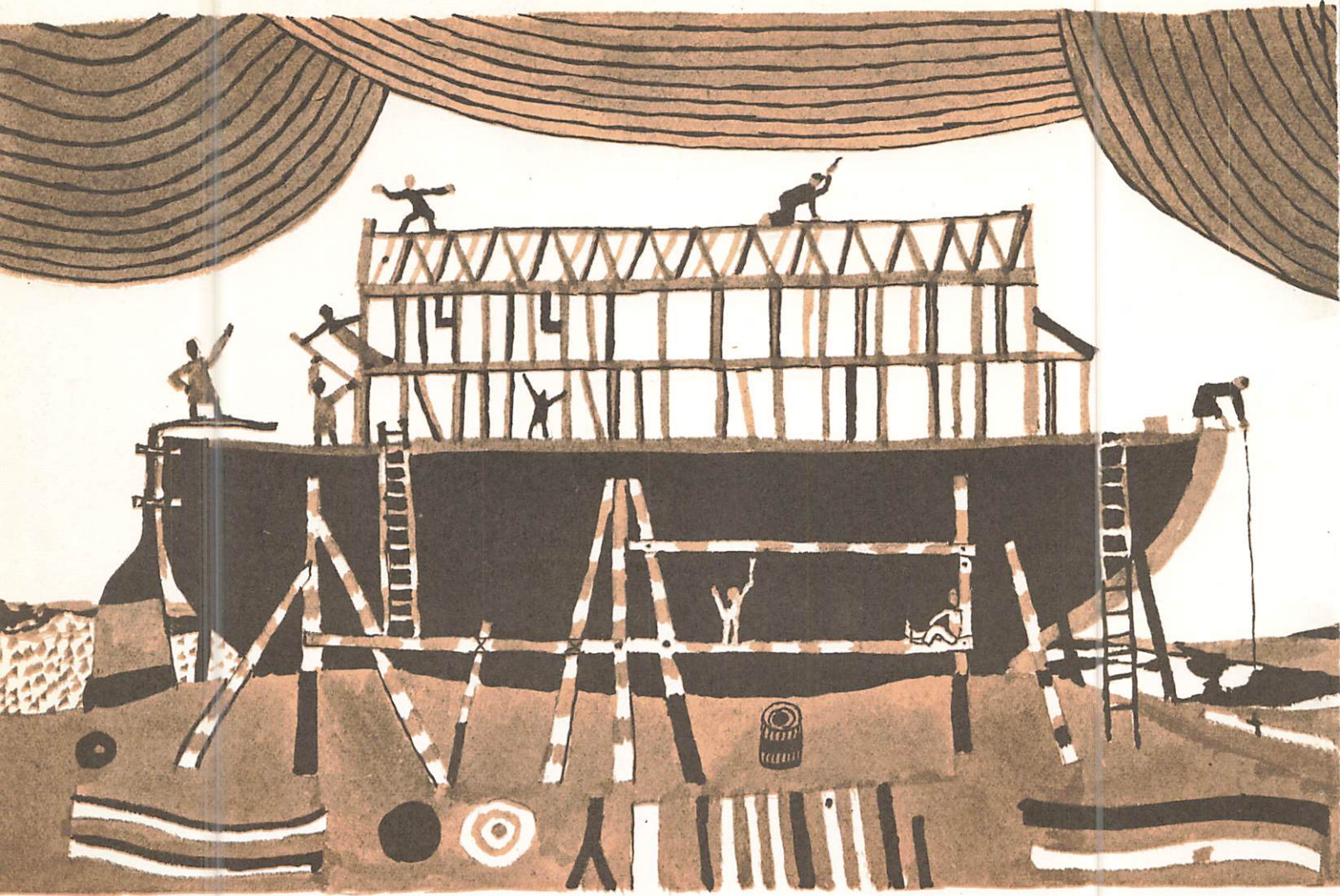
NOAH

How Noah walked with God

After Cain committed that first crime, men went on committing crimes. There were more and more people on earth, for men and women married and had children. But there was sin in them all, and there was wickedness all over the earth. Men were stealing, fighting and killing each other everywhere. God wondered whether it might be better if men disappeared altogether. But he knew that not all men were wicked.

Noah was a good, honest man. He walked with God, which means that he did God's will. So God said to Noah, "I have decided to make an end of all living things, I will destroy them from the earth. But I will save you and your family. I shall make an agreement with you and your family, a Covenant to keep you safe – you and your wife and children, and two of every kind of animal. Men and animals will not die out."





How Noah built an ark

God said to Noah, "In seven days, I shall send rains on the earth for forty days and forty nights. The rivers of this land, the Tigris and the Euphrates, will overflow their banks and there will be a huge flood, every living creature will drown. But I have made a promise to save you. So you must build a great boat called an ark. You must make it of wood and coat it with pitch inside and out. It must have rooms inside it, and it must be very big because it must hold a great many

people. Make a roof above the deck of the ark, and put a large doorway in the side. It must have a lower deck, and a second and third deck.

You must take a male and female of every kind of living creature on earth into the ark with you ; for they have not committed any crime and you shall keep them alive. Also take on board all the kinds of food you will need, and store it up, for your family and for the animals to eat."



To both man and beast you give protection.
O Lord, how precious is your love.
My God, the sons of men
find refuge in the shelter of your wings.
In you is the source of life,
in your light we see light.
May love continue in those who know you,
give justice to those who do good!
Let the foot of the proud not crush me,
nor the hand of the wicked cast me out.
See how the wicked have fallen!
Thrown down, they shall never arise.

PSALM 36 (35)



How God's anger ceased

Noah obeyed God and he built the great boat. Next he took his wife and his sons, and his sons' wives, on board the ark, and also the animals that were to be saved, by God's will. After seven days heavy rains fell, and the water swelled the rivers and the floods covered all the land. It was as if windows in the sky had opened, or huge fountains had burst out from the depths under the earth. For forty days and forty nights the rains fell so that every living thing was drowned.

But Noah's great boat floated quietly on the surface of the flood.

But at last God made a wind blow over the earth. The windows of the sky and the fountains of the deep closed up and the flood began to go down. But still Noah could not see solid ground anywhere. He let loose a dove, but it came back because it could find

no perch. But next time she was sent out she came back with a twig of an olive tree in her beak, and after that time she did not return. Then Noah knew that the land was reappearing. Before long the ark came to rest on the slopes of Mount Ararat.

Then Noah came out of the ark. A rainbow shone in the sky, and God said, "Look, I am putting away the bow of my anger. It shall never again strike the earth with such a flood. Instead it shall be in the sky as a sign of my Covenant with you, an agreement with men and all living things, that I shall not destroy them again. When the bow is in the sky I shall remember this Covenant, which is forever."

Noah gave thanks to God. He built an altar and offered a thanksgiving sacrifice to God. And in his heart he heard the words of God's wonderful promise.

The first Covenant

God had promised Adam and Eve that mankind would triumph over evil ; now he made his first Covenant with the world. He was showing his love and his pity for the world's misery. Later there came other signs of God's saving love – the Covenant with the Fathers of Israel, the Law of Moses, and last of all, God's gift of salvation through his Son.

While the earth remains
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
shall not cease.

For God's is the life-blood of man,
and man is made in God's likeness :
be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.
This is my Covenant with you
and with your children.





The sacrifice of a just man

Give judgment for me, O Lord,
for I will walk the path of perfection.
I trust in the Lord ; I have not wavered.

Examine me, Lord, and try me ;
O test my heart and my mind,
for your love is before my eyes
and I walk according to your truth.

I never take my place with liars
and with hypocrites I shall not go.
I hate the evil-doer's company :
I will not take my place with
the wicked.

To prove my innocence, I wash
my hands

and take my place around your altar,
singing a song of thanksgiving,
proclaiming all your wonders.

Do not sweep me away with sinners,
nor my life with bloodthirsty men
in whose hands are evil plots,
whose right hands are filled with gold.

As for me, I walk in the path
of perfection.

Redeem me and show me your mercy.
My foot stands on level ground :
I will bless the Lord in the assembly.

PSALM 26 (25)

The sons of Noah were called Shem, Ham and Japheth. They became the fathers of many races. The people of God, the Hebrews, knew from their ancient traditions that their race had sprung from the family of Shem, the eldest. That is why we call the Hebrews 'semites'.

But the hearts of men were still deaf and blind to God's love, as Adam and Eve had been when they sinned. And so it happened that men grew very proud of their own intelligence and their power. They thought that God dwelt high up, so they wanted to reach as high as God, and the people of Babylon said, "Come, let us build ourselves a tower with its top in the heavens. Then we shall be like God, and have a name of power over all the earth." But God punished them. They could not understand God's ways, they couldn't even understand each other's. So the proud tower did not make men one, it divided them. Men are still divided by languages and races, unless God's love brings them together.

The tower of Babel





ABRAHAM

Shem, Noah's eldest son, had many descendants. One was called Eber, whose son was Peleg. Peleg had sons and grandsons, among them Terah. Terah lived in Ur in Chaldea. Ur was a wealthy city where people lived very comfortably, but they had no love of God because they still worshipped stars. God wanted a people who would be able to know him and love him, and he made a plan to make such a people for himself.

First of all God made Terah and his family leave Ur and move nearer to the land of Canaan. The whole family settled in a town called Haran. Terah had a son called Abram, and a grandson called Lot who was Abram's nephew. Abram and his wife Sarai were

childless. Terah died in Haran when he was very old.

Then God said to Abram, "Leave your country and your kindred and your father's house, and go into a land which I will show you. I will make of you a great people and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Abram obeyed God. He took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot and his servants and household goods and set out for the land of Canaan.

Abram, father of faith

Abram travelled through the land until he came to a place called Sichem where stood the oak-tree called Moreh. God came to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." Abram believed God's words and built an altar there to show his faith. Again at Bethel he built an altar to the Lord.

One day God told him more. "Lift up your eyes," he said, "and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward. All the land which you can see I will give to you and your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as many as the grains of the dust. Get up! Walk through the length and

breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." But Abram said, "Lord what are these blessings for? You know that I am still childless, so that a slave born in my house must be my heir." But God said, "Your own son shall be your heir." He led Abram outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So many shall your descendants be."

Abram believed the word of the Lord. He believed something that seemed impossible. And God blessed Abram so that he would be father of all those who believe, following his example of faith.





How God changed Abraham's name

As Abram looked at the children of his slaves and maid-servants he wondered how God would fulfil his promise. But God told him, "I will make a firm Covenant for ever between me and you and your descendants, and I will be their God, patient and merciful. As for you, you must keep my Covenant and be faithful to my Law from generation to generation. So you will become the people chosen by God, to bring the knowledge of salvation to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death."

Again God said to Abram, "My Covenant is with you, and you shall no longer be called Abram but Abraham, which means : Father of many nations. And as for Sarai, she shall be called Sarah : Princess, for kings of nations shall come from her."



How Sarah laughed

Abraham could not understand how God would keep his promise. One day he was sitting in the door of his tent. He saw three travellers coming and courteously offered them hospitality. So the travellers stopped, and Abraham and Sarah prepared a meal for them. When it was ready the travellers said, "Where is your wife, Sarah?" Abraham said, "She is in the tent." Now, God had chosen to give a message to Abraham by these mysterious strangers, and now he told Abraham, "I will surely return to you in the spring and Sarah your wife shall have a son."

The three men were angels, which means : Messengers from God. God was showing by the word of these Messengers that in God's plan Abraham was already the father of a great people, the people of the Hebrews who would one day become God's Chosen People, those who believe, and are called from among all the nations of the earth.

Abraham and Sarah were simple and honest people, who were ready to obey God, but this news seemed to them quite unbelievable. Sarah began to laugh. "How could we have a child? Abraham is an old man and I too am old enough to be a grandmother!"

God said to Abraham, "Why did she laugh! Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the proper time Sarah will have a son." And God remembered his Covenant and Abraham's faith, and Sarah did conceive a son.

At last Sarah's son was born. She had laughed when his birth was promised, and now she called him Isaac, which means something like : son of smiles. "Who would have thought that Sarah would suckle a child?" she said. "All who see me must laugh over me!" And the old parents were filled with wonder at it.

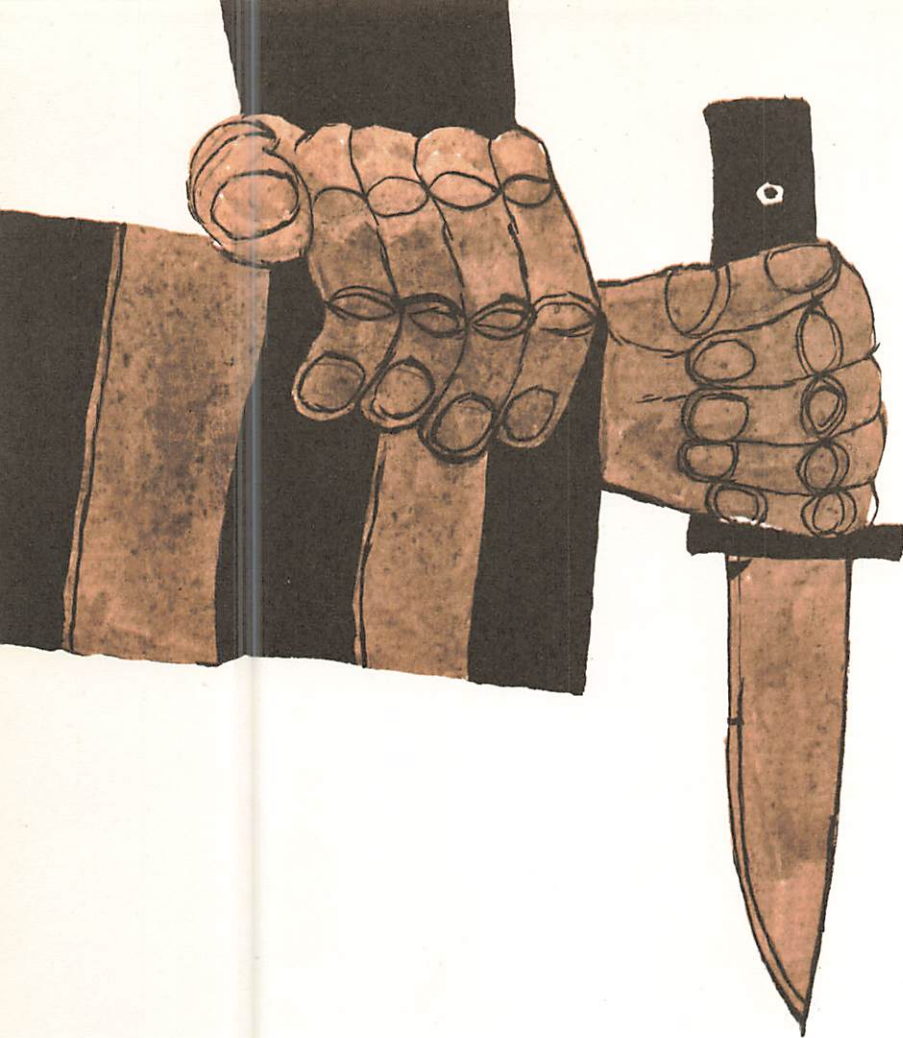




God tests the faith of Abraham

But God wanted to test Abraham's faith even more. He called to him and said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac whom you love, and go to the mountain to offer him to me as a sacrifice in the place I will show you." Abraham rose early, saddled his ass and took two of his servants with him, and his son Isaac. When they came to the foot of the mountain Abraham said to the servants, "Stay here with the ass. I and the boy will go up there and worship, and come back to you."

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he himself took the fire and the knife. On the way up Isaac said, "Father! Look, here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" Abraham answered, "God himself will give the lamb for a sacrifice, my son." When they reached the place which God had told him Abraham built an altar and laid the wood in order, and tied up Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar.



Then Abraham took the knife to kill his son, but the Messenger of the Lord called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am!" God said, "Do not touch the boy ; for now I know that you fear God, since you did not withhold your son, your only son."

Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns, so he offered it as a sacrifice instead of his son.

God confirmed his Covenant and said, "Because you have done this I will indeed bless you. I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sands on the sea-shore. You shall rule over your enemies and through your descendants all the peoples of the earth shall be blessed."

As a father has compassion on his sons
the Lord has pity on those who
fear him ;

for he knows of what we are made ;
he remembers that we are dust.
But the love of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear ;
his justice reaches out to children's
children

when they keep his covenant in truth,
when they keep his will in their mind.
Give thanks to the Lord, all his hosts,
his servants who do his will.

Give thanks to the Lord, all his works,
in every place where he rules.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord!

PSALM 103 (102)

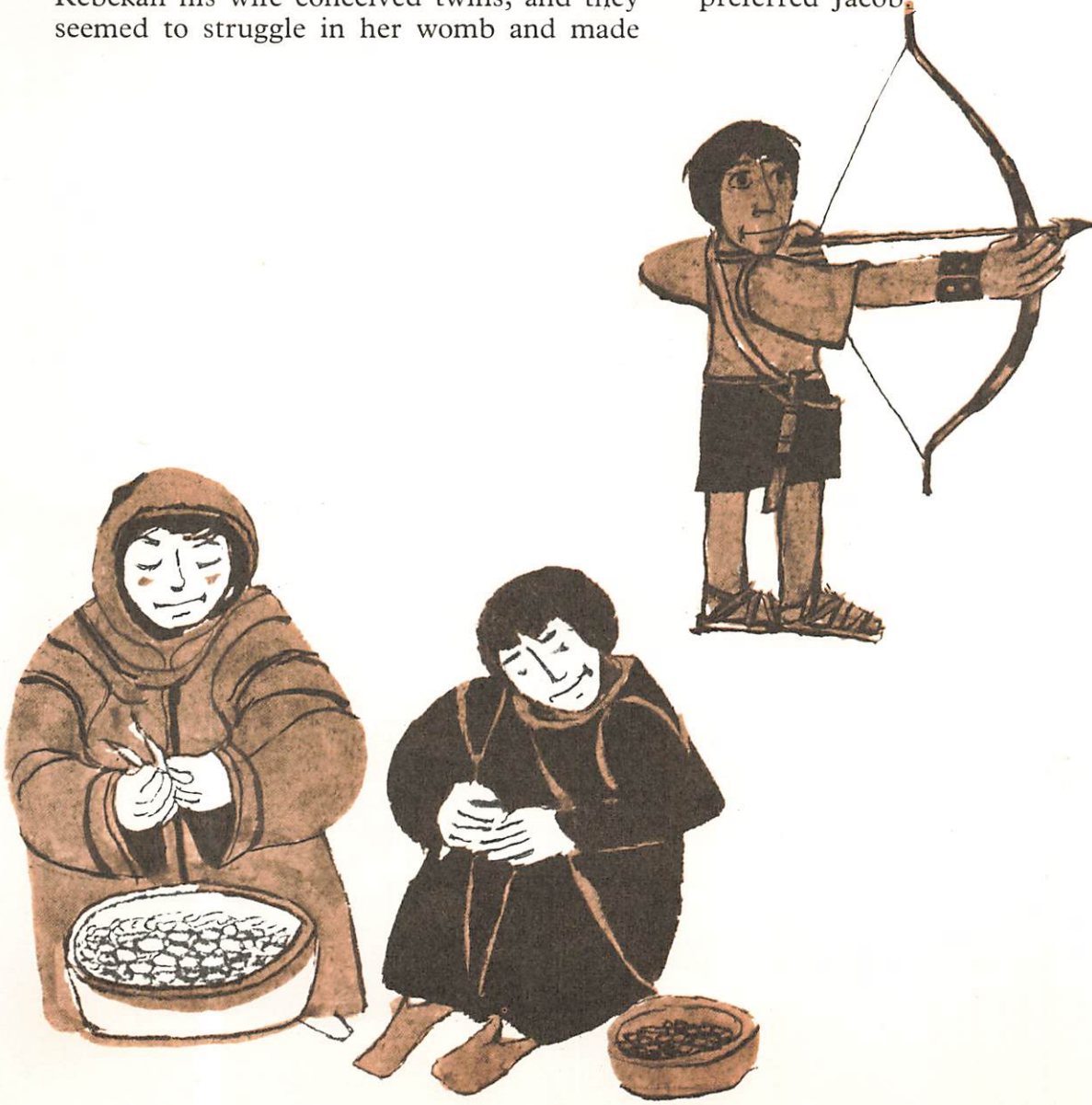
JACOB AND JOSEPH

Abraham's son Isaac was the father of Jacob and Esau

Sarah died and Abraham mourned for her and buried her in a tomb he had bought near the oaks of Mamre, where God's Messengers had announced the birth of Isaac, their son.

Isaac was forty years old before he married. His wife was called Rebekah. She was the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean, and the sister of Laban, Abraham's great-nephew. But years passed, Isaac was sixty years old, and still Rebekah had no child. So Isaac prayed to God that he might have a son before he died, and God granted his prayer. Rebekah his wife conceived twins, and they seemed to struggle in her womb and made

her very miserable. So she prayed and asked God what this meant. Then a voice in her heart told her, "These children will be fathers of two peoples born of you, who shall be divided. One shall be stronger than the other, but the elder shall serve the younger." When the babies were born the first was called Esau. He was red and hairy and strong and he grew up to be a good hunter who loved to chase game. The second was called Jacob, and he was a quiet boy who liked to stay by the tents. Isaac loved Esau best, for he liked the game, but Rebekah preferred Jacob.





How Jacob became the elder

One day Jacob was making soup when Esau came back from hunting, quite exhausted. Esau said, "Give me some of that soup, I'm famished!" But Jacob was cunning. He said, "First sell me your right as the eldest son!" Esau said, "What use is my birthright if I die of hunger?" And Esau sold his birthright for the sake of some bread and some lentil soup. Jacob was cunning, for he knew that the eldest would get a double share of their father's goods. But Esau had shown that he did not care about his right which made him, as the eldest, the heir to the Promise which God had made to Abraham.

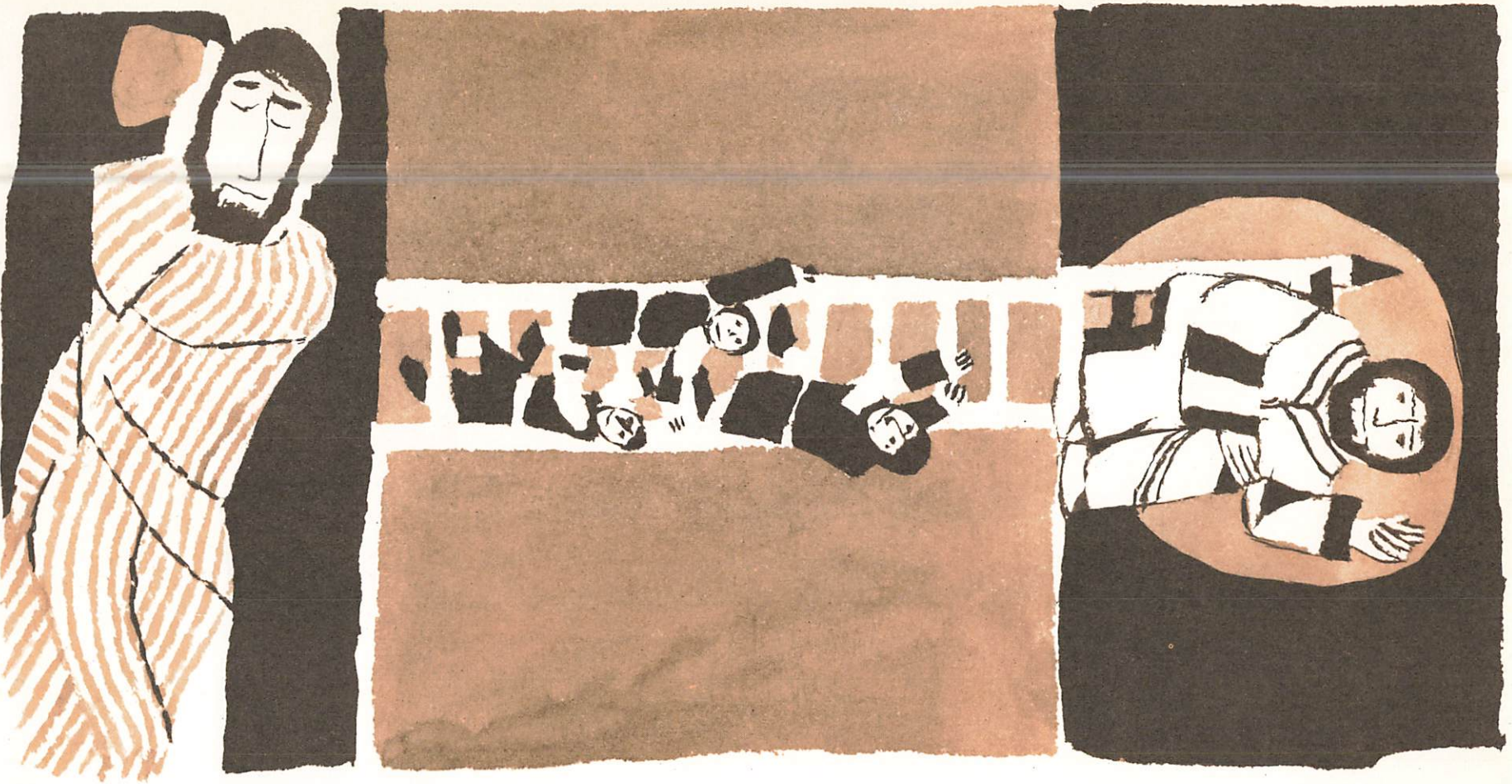
There came a great famine in the land, and

Isaac was obliged to move his camp and his family. It was difficult to find any water in all the country around. But God showed them a new well and Isaac understood that God would never forsake them. He heard God's voice in his heart saying, "I am the God of Abraham, your father. Do not be afraid, for I am with you and I will bless you and multiply your family for the sake of Abraham, my servant." But God had already chosen Jacob to be the heir of his Promise, for God chooses his servants as he wishes. He did not curse nor reject Esau, but it was his plan that the younger son should receive the blessing from God which could make him a Father, or Patriarch, of the chosen people.

Isaac had become very old and blind. One day he called his son Esau and said, "I am old and may soon die. Take your bow and quiver and hunt some game for me. Bring me some in a stew, so that I may eat, and bless you before I die." So Esau went to hunt for game for his father. Rebekah had heard all this and she said to her son Jacob, "Go to the flock and fetch me two good kids. I will make a stew of them and you must give it to your father. Then you will be the one to receive his dying blessing." She gave Jacob Esau's clothes, and put the kid's skin on his hands and neck so that Isaac, feeling him, thought he was Esau, who was hairy. So Isaac ate the stew and gave Jacob the blessing of the first born. "May God give you the dew of heaven," he said, "and rich earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you. Be lord over your brothers." When Esau came back he realised what Jacob had done and he was very angry, but he knew in his heart that he had shown scorn for his birthright when he sold it for some lentil soup. When Isaac realised the trick he blessed Esau also, but he could not alter what had happened. Jacob now counted as the eldest, chosen by God as heir to the Promise.



Jacob's dream



Jacob was afraid of his brother, so he ran away to his uncle, Laban. On the way, night came on and he slept in a desert place and took one of the stones of the place as a pillow. He dreamed that a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. Angels of God were going up and down on it. And the Lord God stood above it and said, "The land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go." When Jacob awoke he said, "This place makes me afraid, for surely God is here, and this is the gate of heaven." He took the stone he had slept on and stood it up and anointed it with oil. He called the place Bethel, 'Home of God', and he said, "If God will be with me, the Lord shall be my God."

So Jacob came to Laban's home. He married Rachel, Laban's daughter, and became like one of his family. Jacob was a good shepherd, he cared for his uncle's flock so well that his share brought him great riches. Laban became jealous of his nephew's wealth and they often quarrelled, so Jacob decided to return to his own country, and he set off, taking his big family and his flocks. Laban chased after him, but after a quarrel Jacob and Laban were at last reconciled, and made a covenant of peace. Jacob went on towards the land of Canaan and on the way there God revealed himself to Jacob once more by sending angels. Jacob said, "This is God's army!" He knew that God was with him and would keep his Promise to Abraham.

How Jacob was reconciled with his brother

Jacob wanted to be reconciled with Esau, so he sent messengers ahead with messages of peace. But when they came back they told him, "Esau is coming with four hundred armed men." Jacob was afraid, and he prayed to God, "Lord, you chose me, and told me to return to my country. Save me from the hand of Esau, for he may come and kill us all." He told his servants to take presents to his brother – goats, ewes and rams, cows and bulls and asses.





The same night he arose and sent his family across the ford which was the frontier, but Jacob stayed alone. A Messenger of God wrestled with him until day-break, but Jacob was too strong for him, and he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And the answer came, "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have fought and won," and he blessed him. In the strength of this blessing Jacob was able to be reconciled with Esau and he came back into his own country at last.

Jacob had twelve sons who became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zabulon, Joseph, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher and Benjamin, who was born when Joseph was in Egypt.

How God chose Joseph among the sons of Jacob

Among all his sons Jacob loved the youngest, Joseph, best of all. One day he gave him a present of a beautiful coat with long sleeves, and the other brothers were jealous and began to hate Joseph.

Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to all his family. He said, "I dreamt that we were harvesting, each binding a sheaf in the field, and suddenly my sheaf arose and stood upright, and your sheaves gathered round it and bowed down to my sheaf." His brothers said, "Do you really think this means that you are going to rule us or have power over us?" And they hated him even more than before.

Then he dreamt another dream and told it to his family: "I have dreamt another dream, and I saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing down to me." This time even his father scolded him and said, "What sort of dream is this? Shall I and your mother and your brothers bow ourselves to the ground before you?" His brothers were very jealous of him, but Jacob his father kept the saying in his heart, wondering if perhaps God was showing his son that he had some great work for him.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flocks near Shechem. Joseph was still at home, and one day his father called him and said, "Go now, and see if all is well with your brothers, and with the flocks." So Joseph set off, and he found his brothers, but further away than he had expected.





Joseph in Egypt

When his brothers saw Joseph coming they said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer! Come, let us kill him and throw him into a dry water-pit. We shall say that a wild beast has devoured him. We shall see what will become of his dreams!" But Reuben was less unkind than the others. He said to them, "If you kill him, God will punish us. Throw him into this pit, but do not hurt him." For he wanted to save him from his brothers and bring him back to his father. So they seized Joseph and stripped off his beautiful robe and threw him into a pit too deep for him to climb out. Just then a caravan passed on its way to Egypt. The brothers decided to sell Joseph to these merchants. They pulled him out and sold him for twenty pieces of silver. Then they killed a goat and dipped Joseph's coat in the blood. They brought the coat to their father, and he believed that Joseph was dead, and mourned for his son for many days.



The merchants and their caravan came to Egypt and sold Joseph to Potiphar, the captain of the guard of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Potiphar soon realised that Joseph was clever and that God was with him in all his work, so he made him the chief servant in his house. But one day Potiphar's wife told her husband wicked and untrue tales about Joseph, saying that Joseph had betrayed his trust. Then Potiphar was angry and put him in prison.

Joseph was in prison for two years. The other prisoners soon realised that he was very clever, and that God often helped him to understand the meaning of dreams.

One night Pharaoh had a dream. He dreamt he was standing by the Nile, the River of Egypt, and he saw seven sleek, fat cows coming up, and they fed among the reeds. But seven thin, wild cows came up after them and ate up the sleek, fat cows. Pharaoh was troubled, and spoke to his servants about it. One of them had once been in prison with Joseph. He suggested that the King should send for this prisoner who was skilled in understanding dreams. When Joseph was brought he explained Pharaoh's dream thus: "The seven fine cows are seven years

of good harvests, and the lean cows are seven years of famine, so bad that the years of plenty will be forgotten. Let Pharaoh choose a man with power to set aside enough grain in the good years to save the country."

Pharaoh said, "You shall be the man, since God has shown you all this." He took off his ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and made him governor over all the land of Egypt, next to Pharaoh himself. Joseph married an Egyptian and had two sons called Manasseh and Ephraim. When the years of the great famine came it struck not only Egypt but the neighbouring countries, too. People from all around came to Egypt to buy the grain which Joseph had stored in the store-houses.



Jacob said to his sons, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down and buy some, or we shall die." So they went, but Jacob kept the youngest, Benjamin, at home. The brothers came and found Joseph, who was in charge of the grain. They did not know who he was, but he knew at once that they were his brothers, and to teach them a lesson he spoke roughly and accused them of being spies. When they denied it he said, "If you are telling the truth, prove it by fetching your youngest brother Benjamin." So they went back to Jacob and fetched Benjamin also.

The grain sacks were all filled, but Joseph gave orders to put a gold cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers were already on their way home with the grain sacks when Joseph sent his servants who overtook them. When they found the cup they said that the sons of Israel had stolen it, so they were all brought back to Joseph. But Joseph thought they had been punished enough, so he told them who he was and embraced them all, and invited his whole family to be with him in Egypt.

Jacob and all his family came and settled in Egypt. When Jacob was dying he called Joseph and said, "Swear to me that when I am dead you will take my body to be buried with my fathers." And Joseph swore. Then Jacob said, "I have many sons who will be my heirs. Now I will add your sons to them, and give them my blessing." So Joseph brought Manasseh the elder and Ephraim the younger, and although Joseph was displeased, Jacob gave Ephraim the first

blessing, for he knew that God would make Ephraim's family greater than that of Manasseh. Then he blessed his other sons, and they became the fathers of the twelve great families of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph (through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh) and also the youngest of all, Benjamin.

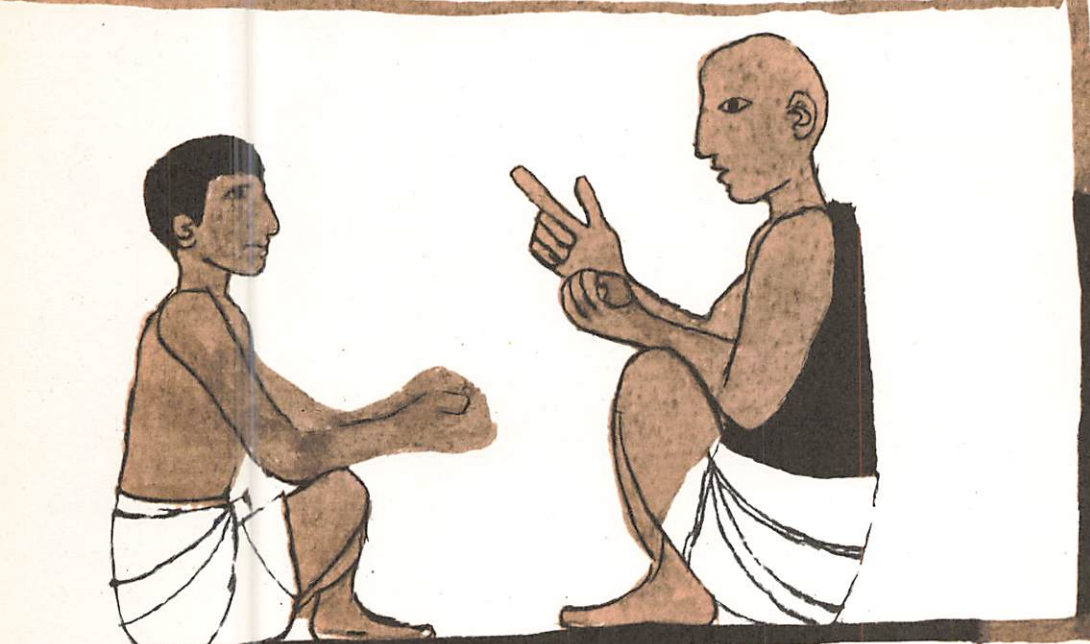
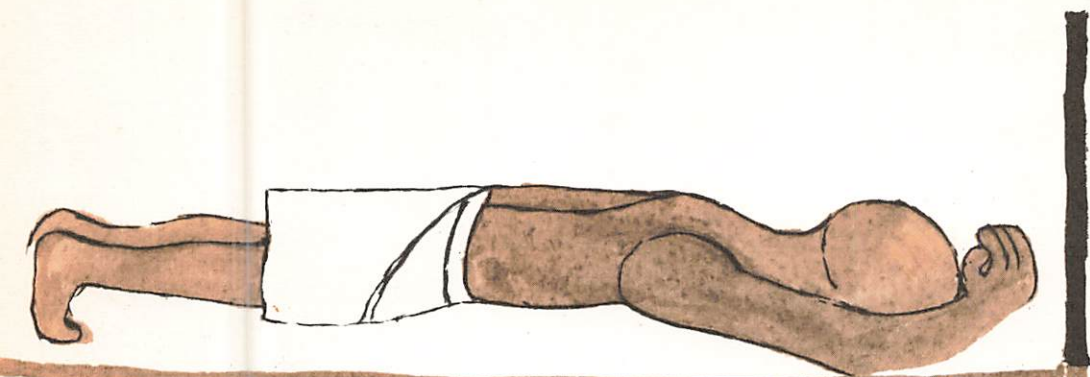




How the tribes of Israel were slaves in Egypt

Joseph and his brothers died, but their descendants stayed on in Egypt, where they multiplied and filled the land, growing prosperous and strong. As the years went by, the Egyptians forgot what Joseph had done for their country, and they grew to fear the Hebrews for their strength and their wealth. So Pharaoh commanded that the people of

Israel should be made slaves of the Egyptians. They were forced to work on the building-sites, making bricks and carrying them in heavy loads to erect the store-houses for the grain. They were forced to till the fields of the Egyptians. They were unhappy and cried to God to rescue them from their slavery.





MOSES

Despite their bondage, the people of Israel continued to thrive and to increase in number. Harsh and cruel laws were passed against them. The Pharaoh even caused many Hebrew babies to be killed, but one baby was saved by two women who put him in a basket, like a little boat among the reeds by the Nile. Pharaoh's daughter heard him crying, and her kind heart was touched. She gave him to a Hebrew woman to nurse, and when he was weaned she took him to be her own son. She called him Moses, which means : taken from the water.

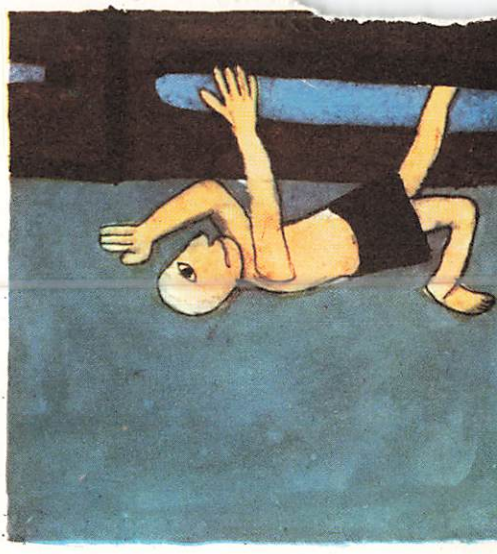
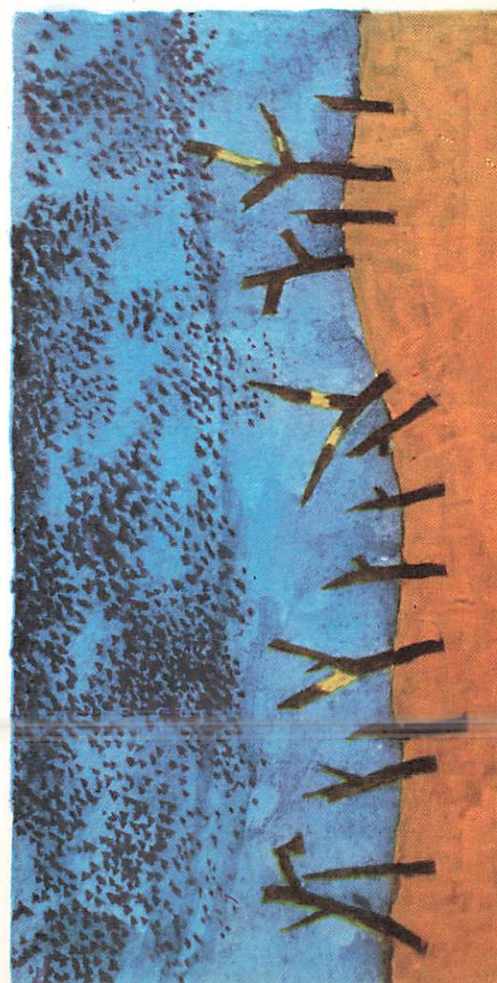
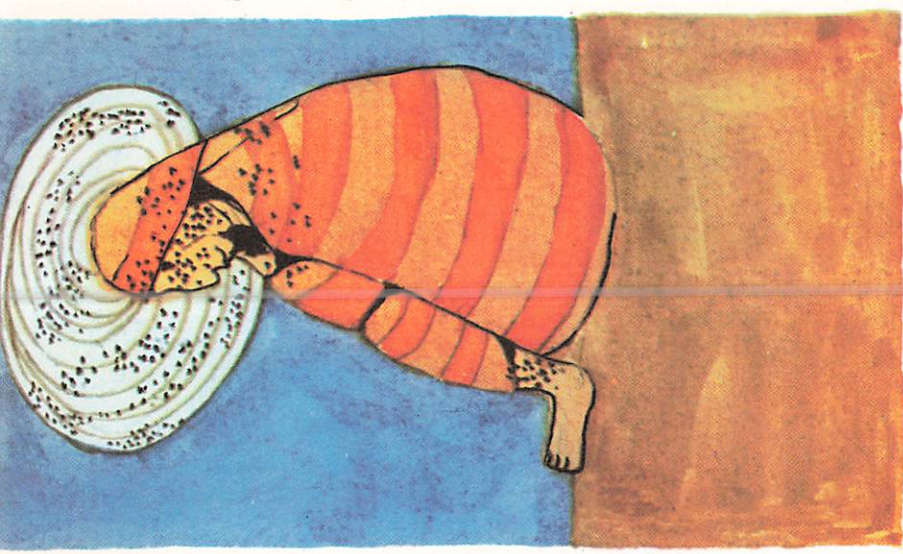
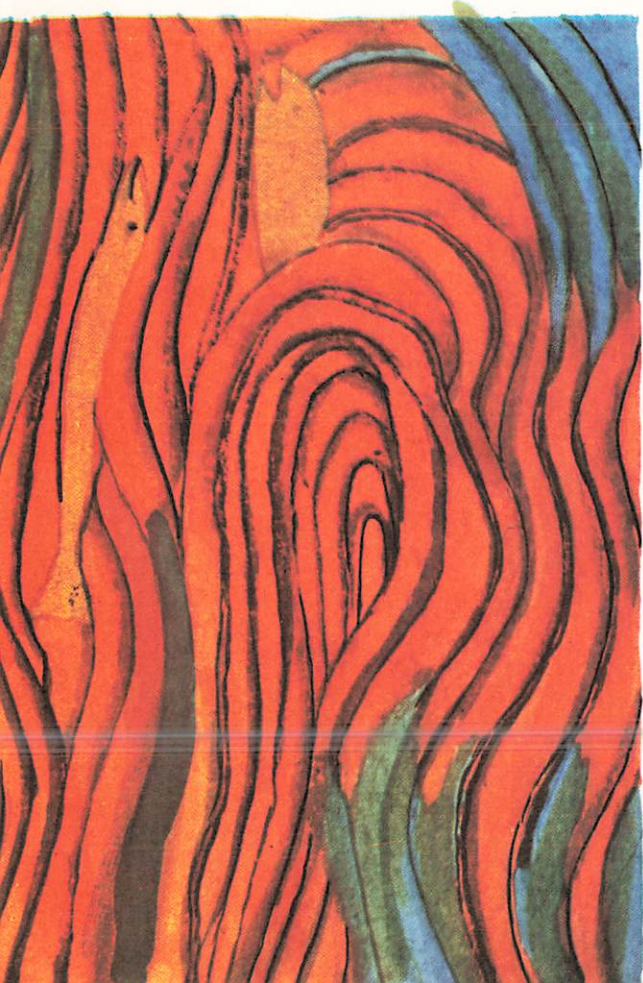
When Moses was grown-up he went out to his people and he saw that they were slaves, forced to labour at building. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people, and in a rage he killed him, thinking that nobody saw. But next day another

Hebrew taunted him with the murder. Moses realised that Pharaoh would soon know, and he was afraid and fled.

Moses fled into the land of Midian, and he stayed there and married the daughter of Jethro, a priest of Midian.

Moses was content there, but the people of Israel groaned under their bondage and their cry came up to God. God remembered his Covenant with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he chose Moses to set his people free.

One day Moses was watching the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law. And he looked up and saw a bush that burned but was not burnt up, and he marvelled. Then God spoke to Moses out of the bush. "I am the God of your fathers," he said, "I have chosen





you to set my people free. Go to Pharaoh, for you will do great signs and he will listen to you." Moses said, "What is your name, so that I may tell the people?" God answered, "I am who I am. Tell them, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, is with you and has sent me!' I will lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, into a land flowing with milk and honey."

God also gave Moses a companion, Aaron, a man who could speak well and would help Moses when he had to speak with the people and with Pharaoh.

Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and asked him to let the people of Israel go, but this only made him angry and he treated the people more harshly than before, giving them still more heavy work to do. So Moses, by the power of God, called down great disasters on the land, which we call the plagues of Egypt. The waters became dark

as blood ; frogs, locusts and flies tormented men and beasts ; hail destroyed the harvest ; horrible boils broke out on the Egyptians ; and a darkness covered the whole land, but in the houses of the people of Israel, light shone.

The first Passover

But Pharaoh still refused to let Israel go. He said to Moses, "Get away from me, never see my face again." But one more disaster was to fall upon Egypt, the most terrible of all.

Moses went to his people and said, "Thus says Yahweh. About midnight I will go

through Egypt, and all the first-born in the land shall die, from the first-born of the Pharaoh to the first-born of the slave at the mill. But I shall pass over the children of Israel and spare them, and I will lead them out of this house of bondage into the land of Promise. And you shall keep a feast for ever to remember this deliverance, for it is the Lord's Passover."

Moses told the people how to prepare the meal. "Let each family take a lamb, a male yearling, without blemish or mark," he told them. "Kill the lamb and sprinkle some of the blood on the door-posts of your houses. It shall be a sign, and when he strikes the sons of Egypt, God will see the blood of the lambs and spare the sons of Israel. You must eat the lamb roasted, and you must eat your bread without yeast (for there is no time for the dough to rise), and with raw herbs. For you must eat quickly, ready for the journey, your coats belted up and with sticks in your hands. For this is the night of the Lord's Passover, and you must keep it each year, to remember the Lord's mercy to you when you were in bondage."

Then the people bowed their heads and worshipped, and they went and did as the Lord had commanded through the mouth of Moses, each family in its own house. This was the first Passover, to celebrate the deliverance of God's people from bondage.

At midnight the Lord struck all the first-born in Egypt, from Pharaoh's son to slave's son. The same night Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go out from among my people, take your people and their flocks and herds, and be gone — but bless me also!" So the people left and God showed them the way, through the mouths of Moses and Aaron. God's people were weak, like a



child that needs to be taught, so God did not lead them by the straight way to the promised land, for other nations still lived there against whom they would have to fight. God led the people by the desert road as far as the sea which is called the Reed Sea.

As they travelled, God was teaching them all the time. He wanted to turn this childish nation into a strong people able to rule themselves. God said to the people, "I have spared your first-born from my anger in Egypt, therefore the first-born of each family is mine. When you come into the land which I have promised you, you shall set apart for the Lord every first-born son, but you shall redeem them, you shall buy them back by offering an animal instead of the child. When your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you will answer, 'It is to remember how Yahweh our God brought us out of Egypt'."

The people of Israel came and camped by the Reed Sea. And the Lord went in front of them to guide them, by the sign of a pillar

of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Then God spoke to Moses and said, "Pharaoh's heart will be hardened and he will pursue you, but I shall save you from his army. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord."

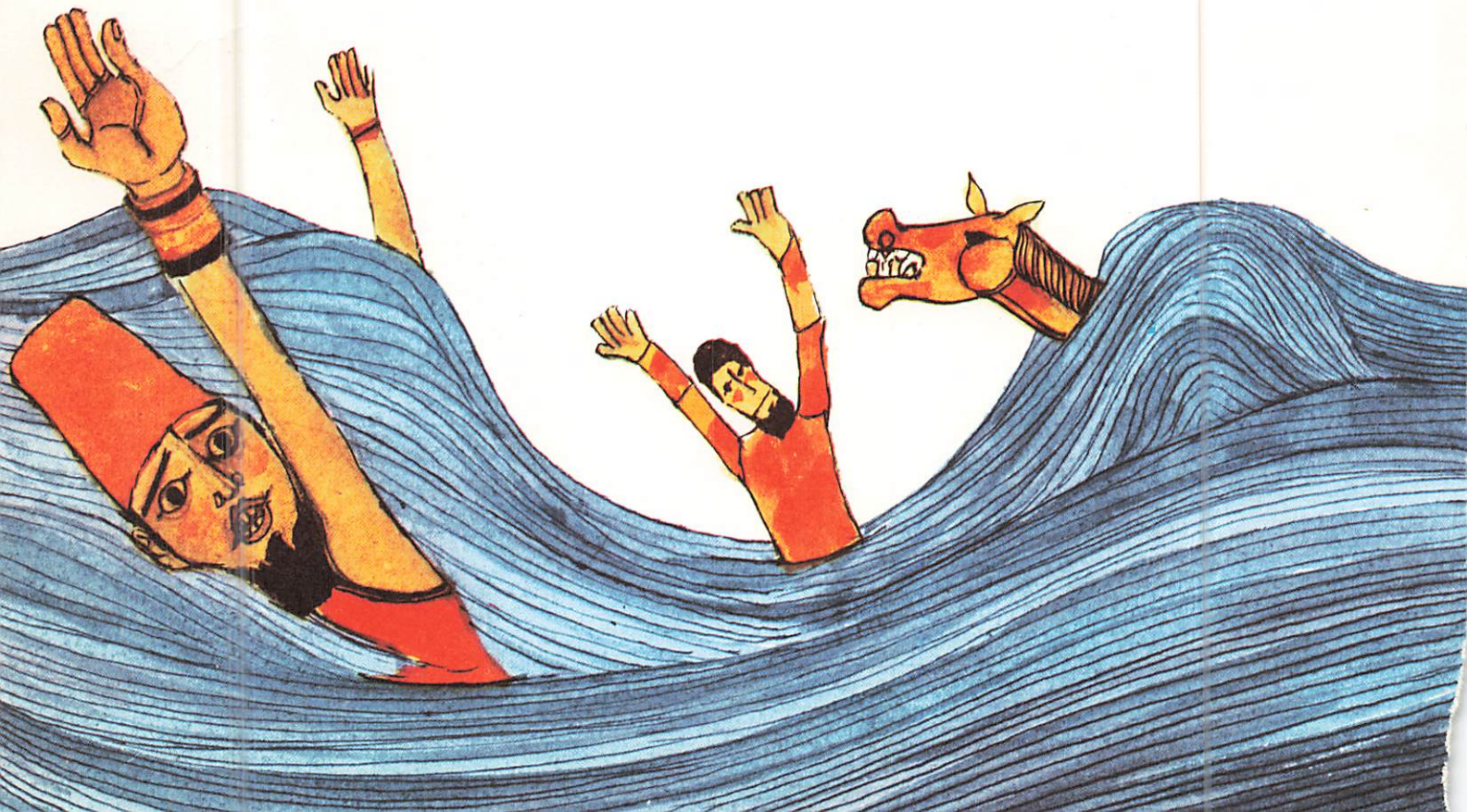
When Pharaoh and his servants heard that the people had gone they said, "What have we done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" Pharaoh took six hundred picked chariots and his best officers and pursued the people of Israel, where they were encamped by the sea.

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes and saw the Egyptians marching after them, and they were afraid. They cried out to God, and said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?" But Moses said, "Do not fear, stand firm, for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again."



The Lord has saved his people

Then the pillar of cloud moved behind the Israelites to hide them from the Egyptians. At God's command Moses stretched his hand over the sea, and a strong east wind drove back the sea, so that Israel passed through the sea on dry ground. The Egyptians went in after them but Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and it came back. The waters covered the chariots and the horsemen and all Pharaoh's army. In the morning the people of God saw the Egyptians lying dead on the sea-shore. And Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done, and they believed in Yahweh and his servant, Moses. In years to come they remembered, and sang this song of Moses :



with a strong arm and with outstretched hand

I will sing to the Lord,
for he has triumphed gloriously,
the horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and my song
and he has become my salvation.
The Lord is a man of war,
Yahweh is his name,
Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea,
and his best officers are sunk in the Reed Sea.
The floods cover them,
they went down into the depths like a stone.
Thy right hand, O Yahweh, glorious in power,
thy right, O Lord, shatters the enemy.
In the greatness of thy glory thine enemies are
overthrown,
thy fury burns them up like stubble.
At the blast of thy nostrils the waters piled up,
the floods stood up in a heap.
The enemy said, "I will pursue, I will overtake,"
but they sank as lead in the mighty waters.
Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously,
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.





GOD'S PEOPLE IN THE WILDERNESS

Here are the people of God in the wilderness. They had a long way to go before they reached the promised land. God wanted them to realise his Presence, and what that meant. Soon they were short of food, and the people complained to Moses. "In Egypt we had meat stew and bread in plenty," they said. "You have brought us here to kill us all!"

God said to Moses, "I will feed my people, but they must show that they are obedient to my word. I will send them birds to eat, and I will give them bread from heaven. Every day I will give them all they need, but they must trust me and not keep any until next day. On the sixth day, however, I will give them enough for two days, for

the seventh day is a day of rest, and you shall not gather food on it."

So God sent flocks of quails, and later a strange food appeared on the ground. It was white and tasted like honey-cakes.

But the people did not obey. They stored part of the food, in case there might be none next day, and it bred worms and became foul, and Moses was angry with them, because they had not trusted God's word.

Soon there was no water to drink, and the people complained to Moses, "Why did you bring us here to kill us with thirst?" But Moses struck a rock and water burst out. Moses called the place Quarrelling, because the people quarrelled with God when they were thirsty, and would not trust him.



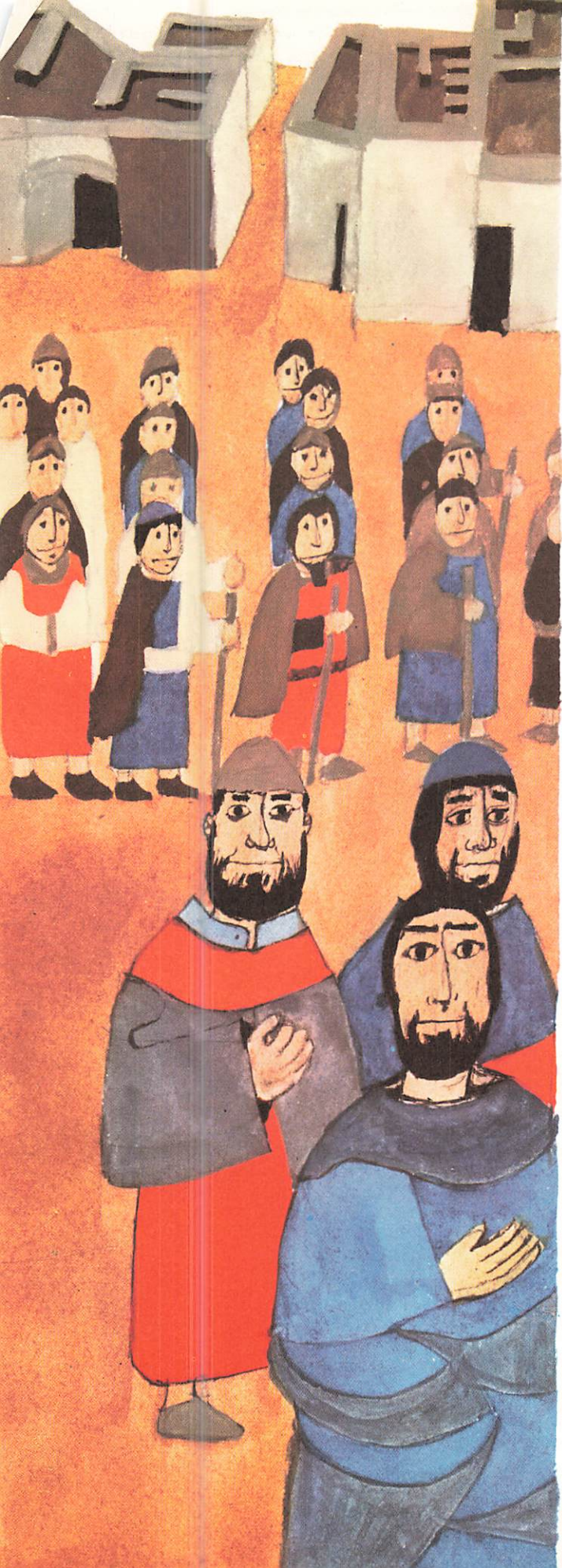
O give thanks to the Lord for he is good ;
for his great love is without end.
Our fathers when they were in Egypt
paid no heed to your wonderful deeds.
He threatened the Reed Sea ; it dried up
and he led them through the deep as through the desert.
But they soon forgot his deeds
and would not wait upon his will.
In spite of this he listened to their distress
so often as he heard their cry.
For their sake he remembered his Covenant
in the greatness of his love he relented.

PSALM 106 (105)

Let them thank the Lord for his love,
for the wonders he does for men.
For he satisfies the thirsty soul,
he fills the hungry with good things.

PSALM 107 (106)



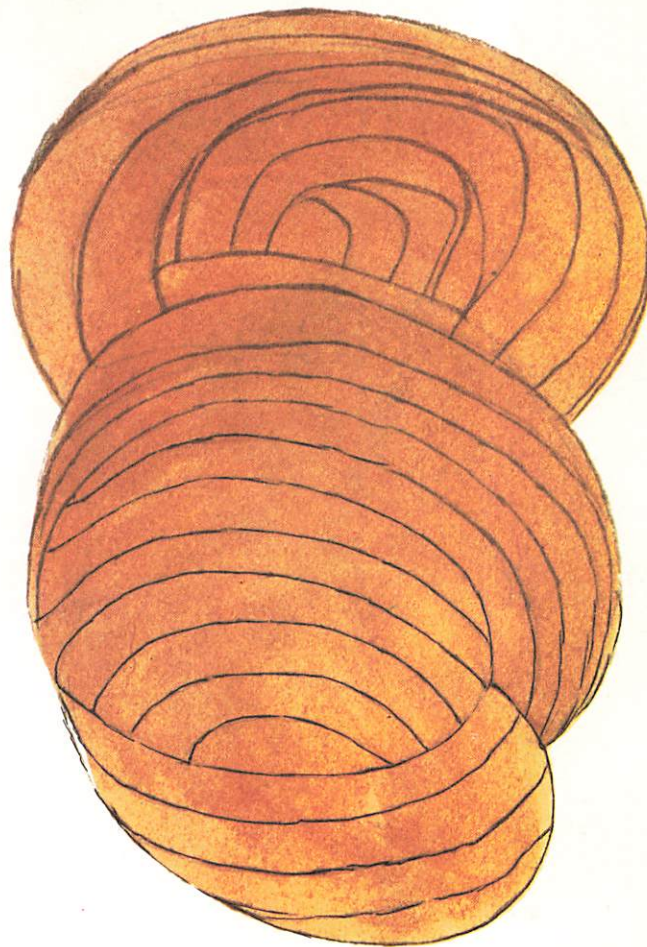


How Moses chose Judges to lead Israel

The work to which God had called Moses was enormous. He had to guide the people, pray for them, lead them in battle, see that they obeyed God's commands, and settle their quarrels. One day Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, came to see him, and watched him giving judgement among the people. Afterwards he said, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people will wear yourselves out, for this thing is too heavy for you, you cannot do it alone. Listen to me and I will give you good advice. You yourself must represent the people before God, teach them his decisions and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. But choose able men from among the people, such as fear God and are trustworthy and honest, and place such men over the people as rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. Let them be there to judge the people whenever they are needed. They can consult you about great matters, but decide the little ones themselves. So it will be easier for you, they will bear the burden with you. If you do this (and God commands you to) you will be able to endure, and the people will go forward in peace."

Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. He chose sensible and trustworthy men as judges, and put them in charge of his people. Now that one part of his work was lifted from him he could concentrate on settling difficult matters, and give more time to prayer. So Moses became more than ever a true servant of God, and God was with him.

In the years that followed these judges became very important in the story of God's people. For a great part of their history the judges were their guides in government and in war, until the time came when Israel chose a King instead. Through many centuries they kept their place as judges, and they ought to have been always bringers of true justice and peace. But sometimes they gave in to the bullying or bribes of powerful people, and the writer of this psalm condemned them for it :



God stands in the divine assembly.
In the midst of the gods he gives judgement :
“How long will you judge unjustly
and favour the cause of the wicked ?
Do justice for the weak and the orphans,
defend the afflicted and the needy.
Rescue the weak and the poor,
set them free from the hand of the wicked !
But you are blind, you grope in the darkness,
and the order of the world is shaken.
I have said to you : ‘You are gods,
and, all of you, sons of the Most High.’
And yet, you shall die like men,
you shall fall like any of the princes.”
Arise, O God, judge the earth,
for you rule all the nations.



God gave the Law to Moses

After three months on the march the people, led by Moses, came to a great mountain, called Sinai. This was the place where God had chosen to give the Hebrew people the Law which would make them his own.

God spoke to Moses and said, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel. 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and now, if you will keep my Covenant, you shall be mine, out of all peoples. You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' Tell them this! Therefore they must prepare themselves and put on fresh clothes. But they must not come near

the mountain, for it is holy. Only Moses shall come onto the mountain."

On the third day there were thunder and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and the whole mountain shook. There was a sound like a huge trumpet blast, and all the people trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. The sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, and the mountain was wrapped in a cloud of smoke, which veiled the glory of God. God called Moses to the top of the mountain.

God spoke all these words, saying :

"I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods. You shall not make any statue or picture of me to worship, because in the end you may worship the image instead of me.

If you pronounce my name without reverence you will be doing wrong.

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. Work for six days, but the seventh is a day of rest, a day consecrated to me.

Respect your father and mother.

You shall not kill.

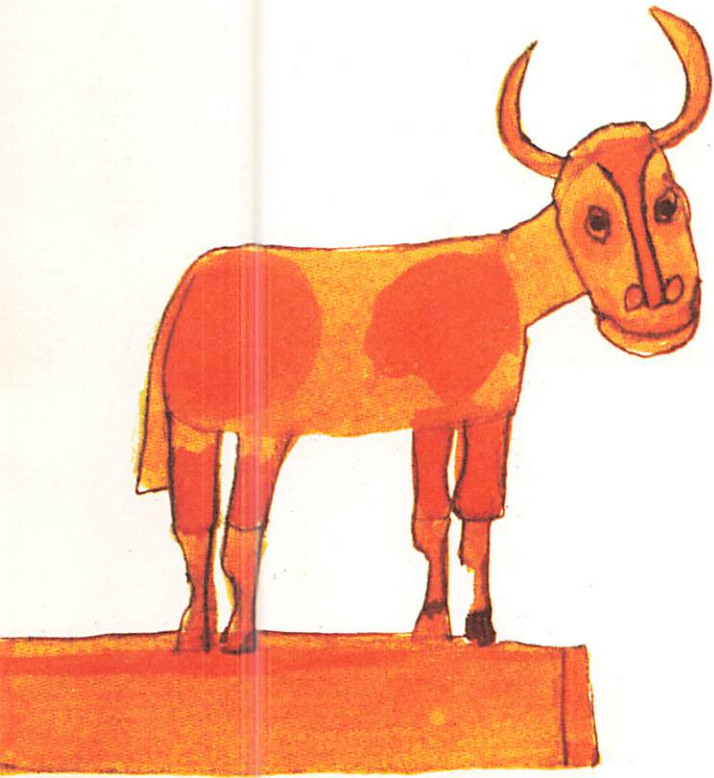
You shall not say false and evil things against others.

You shall not steal anything from your neighbour, neither his wife nor his goods."

Afterwards God inspired Moses to give his people a code of laws to live by for many centuries. They were added to as time went on, and we can read them in the Bible. They explain how Israel should worship God rightly, and how the people should be just and honest with each other. These laws taught Israel to live as God's people.



Our God is a hidden God, no image can show him



Moses was with God on the mountain for a long time and the people grew impatient. They said to Aaron, "We need gods to guide us, for nobody knows what has become of Moses." The Hebrews did not yet understand that no human image can truly show God, so they decided to honour God in the form of a young bull, like one of the great gods in Egypt. Aaron agreed, and they collected all their gold and jewels to make a statue.

The Lord saw what the people were doing and he was angry. Moses was afraid that God would destroy his people for their sin, and he prayed for them, "Lord, why are you angry with your people whom you brought out of Egypt? If they come to harm the Egyptians will say, 'God brought them out into the wilderness only to kill them.' Remember your promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and turn away your anger."

So God turned away his anger, and Moses went down from the mountain, carrying two blocks of stone on which the Law of God was written. Then Moses saw the people dancing and singing round the golden statue. He saw that they had not understood that Yahweh was the true God, whom no image would represent.

Then the anger of Moses flamed hot. He threw down the blocks of stone and broke them, and he took the golden bull-calf and burnt it and ground it to powder.



With the men of the tribe of Levi, Moses punished the people terribly. After that the sons of Levi were called to be the priests of God.

Then Moses gave the order to march on towards the promised land.

At God's command Moses ordered a great tent to be set up. It was richly decorated and he called it the Tent of Meeting. The Tent stood some way outside the camp, and everyone who wanted to find God could go there. Whenever Moses went into the Tent the pillar of cloud which showed the Presence

of God would come down and cover the door of the Tent, for God was speaking with Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud there they bowed down and worshipped, each man at his tent-door. They knew that God spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When he came out of the Tent his face shone with the glory of God so that the people could not bear to look on its radiance.

When Moses went back to the camp he left a young man he trusted, called Joshua, in the Tent. Joshua was to be his successor.

God said to Moses, "You are a man of prayer, but I have work for Aaron also. I will make Aaron a priest, and his sons after him also. Offer a sacrifice, and mark Aaron and his sons with the blood of the victims. You must have priestly vestments made for them and you shall anoint them with sweet-scented oil as a sign that they are consecrated to be my priests and offer worship to me."

So Aaron's family became the first priestly family in Israel. Their work was to bring Israel's offerings to God, to offer sacrifices, to look after all that was used for worship, and especially to guard the Ark of the Covenant. This was a chest of gilded cedar-wood, and inside it were two blocks of stone on which God's Law was engraved. God had given these new blocks to Moses instead of the ones he had broken. Two carved golden Cherubim stood above the Ark. Their outspread wings over-shadowed a throne of solid gold called the mercy seat. There God came to speak with his people.

The priests were always to keep loaves of bread, called the show-bread, laid out before the Lord on a table of gilded acacia-wood. And a lamp-stand of pure gold, bearing seven lamps, burned before the Lord.

The priests had to offer many different sacrifices. Some were *burnt offerings*. Some large animal like a bull, or a small animal such as a goat, was the victim. It was killed and entirely burnt up before God ; this was an offering of herdsmen and shepherds.

A *cereal offering* had to be flour mixed with oil and incense, and cooked into flat cakes, or roasted grain. This was what the farmers were to offer, and there must be no yeast (called leaven) in it, which was considered impure, but only salt which purifies and flavours food.

The *sacrifice of thanksgiving* was a holy feast at which some parts of the victim were burnt





on the altar, but the rest was cooked and eaten by the people. They shared the meal with God : it was a communion of Yahweh and his people.

The *sin offerings* were made when someone had committed some fault against the Law by mistake. The victim was an atonement, a kind of payment. A *guilt offering* was meant to make up for some fault against God or against another of the people. All the rules for sacrifice and worship helped God's people to realise that their whole life must be ordered to God's service. He had chosen them to learn and to show his power and his love.

The people of Israel, taught by God, guided by Moses, sanctified by the priests and judged by their rulers, should have been able to follow God's way. Yet the rest of the long journey towards the promised land was one long story of trouble and fear and unfaithfulness. Moses, Aaron and the judges had to watch constantly if they were to keep the people from doing such evil things that God would be bound to punish them. Sometimes even these leaders were misguided.

Israel wandered in the desert for forty years, says the Bible, and that means the life span of a man. At last Moses saw, far off, the land God had chosen for his people. But he knew that his death was near and that it was Joshua who would lead Israel into their promised home.

Before Moses died he blessed all the twelve tribes of Israel. And he laid his hands on Joshua, and said, "Be strong and of good courage, for you shall go with this people into the promised land. The Lord will not forsake you." Then Moses went up into Mount Nebo, and the Lord showed him all the land, and said, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, 'I will give it to your descendants.'" So Moses the servant of the Lord died. And his people mourned for him many days. There has never been a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who showed Israel the power and love of her God.

The death of Moses





JOSHUA AND THE JUDGES

How Israel went into the promised land

After the death of Moses God spoke to Joshua, whom Moses had put in charge of Israel. God said, "It is time to go, to pass over the Jordan, that great river that still separates you from the land I have given you. If you are faithful to the Law that Moses gave you, you need fear nothing. No man shall stand before you, for I will not fail you or forsake you, I will be with you."

In the morning Joshua gave orders to break camp. The people of Israel came down to the river bank and Joshua said, "Do not be afraid, follow the Ark of Covenant wherever it goes." And it came about that when the priests who carried the Ark stood on the bank the waters were cut off and did not flow. The priests with the Ark stood in the middle of the stream and the people passed over dry shod to the other side, protected by God's presence.

When all the people had passed through the Jordan, God said to Joshua, "Choose one man from each of the twelve tribes and let each one take a stone from the bed of the river and carry it to the place where you will camp tonight." Joshua obeyed, and the stones were piled up to make a monument. The place became a famous sanctuary, and it reminded Israel of how God's people entered the promised land.

The priests carried the Ark up from the Jordan, and the water flowed on. The people stayed there at Gilgal and planted and harvested a crop, and they celebrated there the first Passover in the promised land. Then the manna, the bread from heaven, ceased, for the people could live on food grown on their own land.



How Jericho was taken

The land that Israel had to conquer was guarded by strong, walled towns which were well defended against the advance of God's people. Jericho had huge, thick walls, but God showed Joshua how the town would be given to Israel in spite of them.

Joshua called the priests and told them, "Take the Ark of the Covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before it. You shall march around the city. You shall not shout or let your voice be heard, nor shall any word go out of your mouth until the day I tell you to shout – then you shall shout!"

So it was done. The priests went in front of the Ark of God, blowing the trumpets, and the armed men of Israel came before and behind them. They went round the town once, and then they came back into the camp. This was done each day for six days. On the seventh day they went round the

walls seven times, and then Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!" So the trumpets blew, and the people gave a great war-cry, and the walls fell down flat. So Israel went up into the city, and took it and utterly destroyed it. For God wanted the people to fight in order to gain their land, not to make themselves rich. So they were forbidden to take any riches or any slaves when they conquered a city.

This was so important a law for God's people that when some men broke it God punished all Israel, and they failed to take another walled city, called Ai. It was only when Joshua had prayed mightily to God, and the guilty men had been punished, that they were able to take Ai. Then Israel understood that they could only conquer the land if they obeyed God's law. Their strength in battle came from God who had chosen them.

After this Joshua saw that it was necessary for the people to pledge their loyalty to God's Law once more. He called all Israel together on Mount Ebal, and there with uncut stones Joshua built an altar to the Lord, and they offered burnt offerings to God and sacrificed peace-offerings. There, before all the people, Joshua wrote upon stones a copy of the Law of Moses. Then Joshua read aloud all that was written to the people gathered on the hillsides – men and women and little children, all the assembly of Israel, as Moses had commanded. For only by knowing and keeping the Law could Israel become a holy people, able to carry out the work for which God had chosen them.

After this Joshua began the conquest of the whole country. One by one the towns and kings gave way before Israel's advance. Then they settled the land, each tribe in the place appointed for it.

Joshua had done his work well, but before he died he wanted to be sure that the people would stay faithful to Yahweh. He called Israel together at Shechem, a central place where all could easily gather. He reminded them of all the glorious deeds which God had done for them, and said, "Yahweh is a holy and jealous God, he will not forgive you if you forsake him and serve foreign gods, he will turn and destroy you, after all those great deeds he did for you." The people answered, "The Lord Yahweh we will serve, and his voice we will obey." Then Joshua made a new covenant with the people. He took a huge stone and stood it on end under the oak in the sanctuary of the Lord, and said, "This stone shall be a witness that you have sworn to serve God."

After these things Joshua, the servant of the Lord, died, for he was very old.





THE LATER JUDGES

As long as Joshua lived the Israelites served God, but when he died, and the men who had helped him were dead, they forgot the great work which the Lord had done for Israel. So the people forsook Yahweh and went after other gods. They bowed down before the Baals, the gods of the pagan peoples among whom they lived, statues of wood

and metal. The people were ruled by judges who were called to keep them faithful and do justice among them, but even the judges often failed and misled the people.

But sometimes God heard the people's cry and raised up a faithful and strong judge to lead them, and as long as such a man lived Israel served God and God saved them from their enemies. But when he died they went back to the worship of idols, like the pagans. So the strength of Israel failed and they would not drive out all the people who had lived in the land before Israel came. Some of these nations remained always in the land, to remind Israel of her unfaithfulness. For Israel became weak when she turned away from following Yahweh, who was her strength.

But these great judges made Israel stronger and wiser. One of them, Gideon, was called 'Enemy of Baal' because he broke down one of the altars of Baal, the false god, and led the people to victory in battle.

Samson

One of the most extraordinary of all the judges of Israel at this time was called Samson.

There was a man of the tribe of Dan who was sad because his wife had no children. But an angel from God told him and his wife that she would have a son, who was to be vowed to God. He was never to cut his hair, or drink wine, or eat anything forbidden. The woman bore a son and called him Samson. And the boy grew, and the spirit of the Lord began to work in him, because he was vowed to God.

One of the peoples who lived in the land were called Philistines and soon Samson began to wage a fierce war against them. The story was told that one day the Philistines came to tie up Samson, and he let himself be bound with new ropes. Then

the enemy rejoiced, but the spirit of Yahweh came on him and the ropes broke like charred flax. Then, so the story goes on, Samson seized the jawbone of an ass and killed a thousand men.

Samson judged Israel for twenty years. His enemies could do nothing until the day when he allowed a woman called Delilah to cut off his hair. Samson had sinned by telling her the secret of his vow, so his strength left him. The Philistines made him a slave and put out his eyes. But after a time his hair grew again, and the power of the spirit came on him once more. He pulled down the great temple of the Philistines, killing himself and his enemies. Israel remembered Samson as a man who could do deeds beyond human power, because the spirit of God was in him.





How God's people wanted a king

For Israel the Ark of the Covenant held the memory of all the times when God had stretched out his hand to help his people. This cedarwood chest was also the place of God's power, and when the Ark was among them the Israelites feared nothing, for they knew God was with them. They followed it willingly into the fiercest battle.

The Ark was usually kept in a sanctuary built not far from Shechem, where Joshua had renewed the Covenant with God. There Israel called upon God, Yahweh of Hosts (or armies) both in heaven and earth, for they said, "God commands the stars, the armies of heaven, and he commands the armies of Israel also."

One day a woman called Hannah came to the sanctuary at Shiloh. She prayed for a son, and God heard her as he had heard the prayer of Samson's mother, so she promised to give her son to God. He was called Samuel, and he grew up in the Lord's house at Shiloh. He was the last judge of Israel, and also a great prophet.

At this time the Philistines gathered to attack Israel. The Hebrews took the Ark and went into battle, but because of their sins they lost courage and were beaten, and the Ark was captured. So Israel lost her reminder of God's Presence. They said, "The Glory is gone from Israel."

But Samuel did not lose heart. He prayed to God and offered burnt offerings. When God saw that the people repented he gave them a great victory. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He thought that God would always send judges for his people.

When Samuel was old he made his sons judges over Israel. But his sons were not like him, they took bribes and acted unjustly. The elders of Israel came to Samuel at Ramat and said, "You are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to govern us like other nations."

This displeased Samuel, but God said, "Listen to the people although they have forsaken me, but warn them of the things they will suffer if they have a king." But they would not listen to the warning.

So Samuel chose them a king. The first one was called Saul. Samuel anointed him and proclaimed him king. Saul was a good leader, but he was not brave enough to refuse when the people demanded something wrong. So God rejected Saul and told Samuel to choose another king.

Samuel went to look for a new king in a town called Bethlehem. A man there called Jesse had many handsome sons, but God said to Samuel, "Do not look at their appearance, but judge as I do, for the Lord looks at the heart." So Samuel chose David, the youngest, who was guarding his father's sheep. He was a brave boy who feared neither lion nor bear, and Samuel anointed him to be king.





DAVID AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

How David took Saul's place

King Saul knew that the spirit of God had left him, and he was bitterly unhappy. He was tormented by the spirit of evil, but his servants told him that a boy called David played the lyre very well, and that its music would relieve him. So David came and he stayed with Saul, and whenever the evil spirit seized him David played, and the music refreshed Saul and the evil spirit went away.

At this time Israel was shamed by the challenge of a huge Philistine warrior. None dared oppose him, but David defeated him in single combat and was made champion of Israel. He returned in triumph, and Saul was jealous of him. Next time David came to play to him Saul tried to kill him with his spear. David had to run away and to wander from place to place for fear of Saul.

Several times David could have captured and killed Saul, for David was a strong and clever soldier, but he would not because Saul was consecrated to God. But later the old king died in battle and David became king over Judah, and later over all Israel.

King David won many victories over the foreign nations. He captured a city called Jerusalem and made it his own fortress on the hill of Sion. He recovered the Ark of the Covenant and brought it in triumph to Jerusalem. There was a great feast, and David, dressed as a priest, offered sacrifices and danced before the Ark as it was carried in procession to the tent prepared for it. So Jerusalem became the sanctuary of the Ark instead of Shiloh. One day a temple would be built there for Israel's God.

A psalm of the bringing of the Ark and of God's promise to David

O Lord, remember David,
and all the hardships he endured,
the oath he swore to the Lord,
his vow to the Strong One of Jacob :
"I will not enter the house where I live
nor go to bed where I rest.
I will give no sleep to my eyes
to my eyelids give no slumber
till I find a place for the Lord,
a dwelling for the Strong One
of Jacob."

At Ephrata we heard of the Ark,
we found it in the plains of Yearim.
"Let us go to the place of his dwelling,
let us go to kneel at his footstool."
Go up, Lord, to the place of your rest,
you and the Ark of your strength.
Your priests shall be clothed with
holiness :
your faithful shall ring out their joy.
For the sake of David your servant
do not reject your anointed.
The Lord swore an oath to David ;
he will not go back on his word :
"A son, the fruit of your body,
will I set upon your throne.
If they keep my Covenant in truth
and my laws that I have taught them,
their sons also shall rule,
on your throne from age to age."
For the Lord has chosen Zion,
he has desired it for his dwelling :
"This is my resting-place for ever,
here have I chosen to live."

PSALM 132 (131)



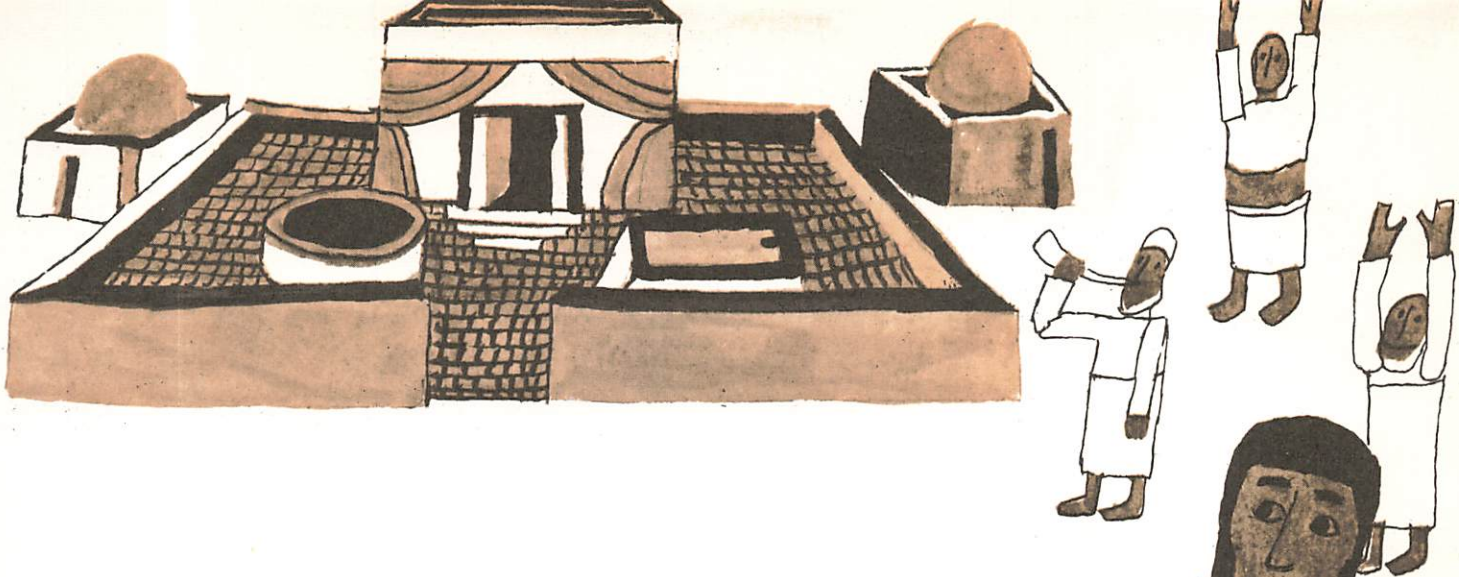
How God promised to continue David's house and family

David was a great king in Israel. Sometimes he sinned, and he had many great sorrows. One most terrible grief came to him when his son Absalom was killed while he was leading a rebellion against David himself.

But David was a good man and faithful, as he had once been a faithful friend to Saul's son Jonathan. On the day the Ark entered Jerusalem God showed David that he was

pleased, through the mouth of Nathan his prophet. David always remembered God's words, "I will make you a great name. The Lord will make you a house, and when your days are finished and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up offspring after you, and will make his kingdom firm. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure before me, your throne shall be made firm for ever."





God's promise to David was like a new Covenant with Israel. It made them sure that God's blessing was on the people he had chosen.

When David died his son Solomon succeeded him. He was a glorious prince who made Israel famous for its power and riches. Above all he had the great honour of building the Temple of God, and on the day when it was consecrated he prayed this lovely prayer :

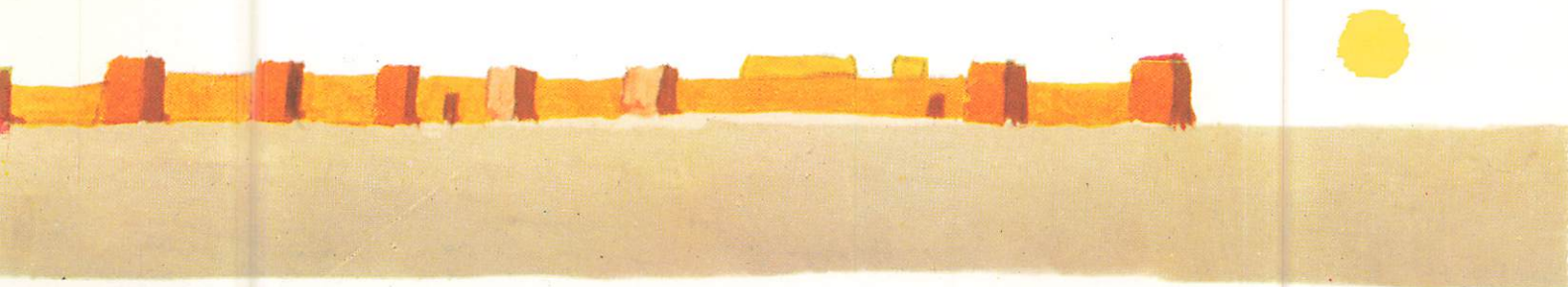
"Lord, heaven and earth cannot contain you,
 how much less this house which I have built!
 Yet let your eyes be open day and night toward this house,
 the place of which you said, 'My name shall be there,'
 listen to the prayer of your people, Israel,
 when they pray toward this place.
 Hear us, in heaven your dwelling place, hear and forgive,
 for they are your people and your heritage."

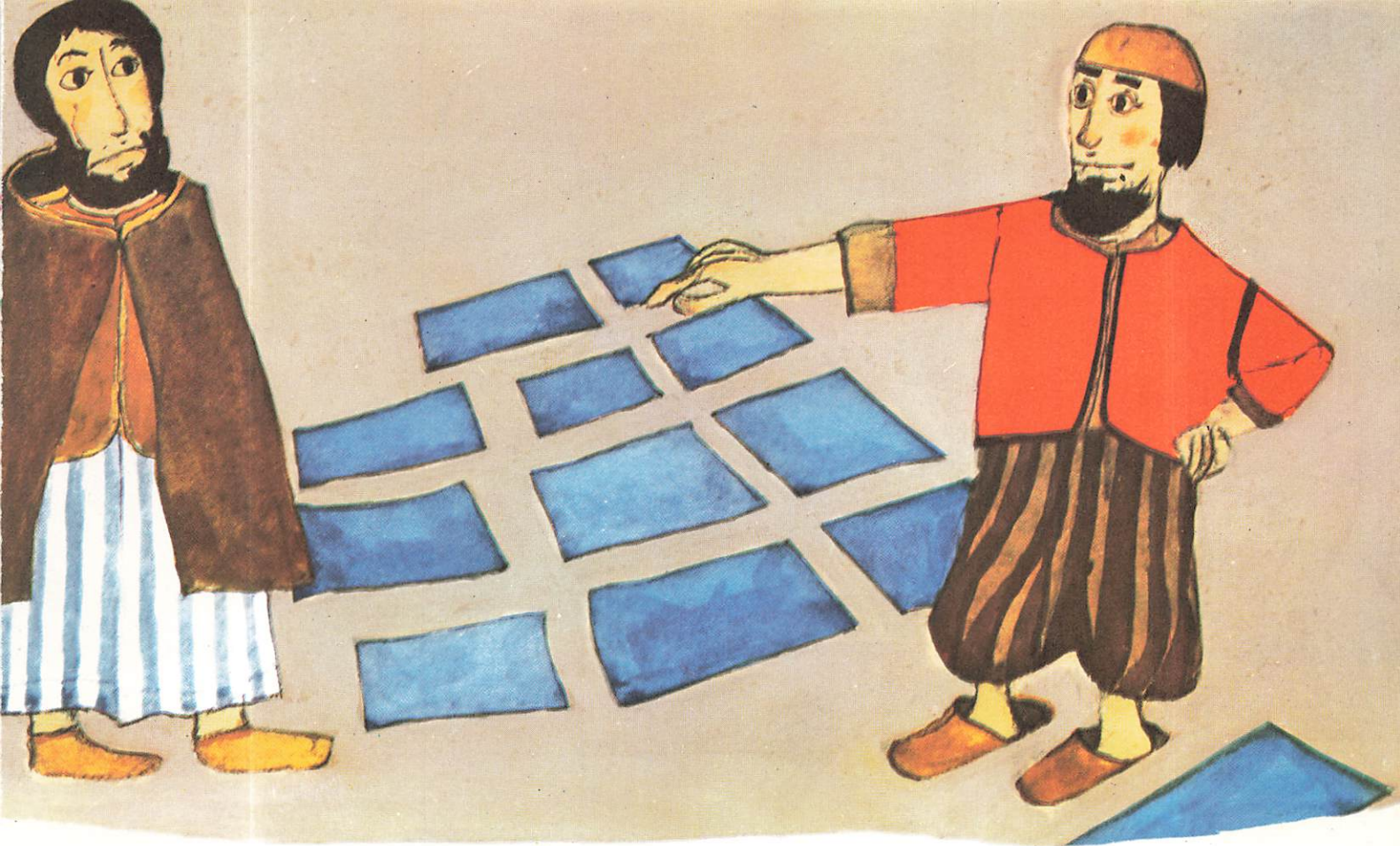


So the Temple of God was in Jerusalem, and it made the city holy, for it was the place where God's people saw his Glory. This little town became the spiritual centre of the kingdom, and through the centuries pilgrims flowed into Jerusalem, the Holy City of Israel. Here is a psalm that the pilgrims used to sing when they came at last to Jerusalem, the city of peace.

I was glad when I heard them say :
"Let us go to God's house!"
And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built as a city,
strongly compact.
It is there the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord.
For Israel's law it is
there to praise the Lord's name.
There were set the thrones of judgement
of the house of David.
For the peace of Jerusalem pray :
"Peace be to your homes!
May peace reign in your walls,
in your palaces, peace!"
For love of my brethren and friends
I say, "Peace upon you!"
For love of the house of the Lord
I will ask for your good.

PSALM 122 (121)





THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

How the kingdom was divided

When Solomon was old he was unfaithful to God. He made statues of the false gods of the neighbouring nations and worshipped them. So God's spirit was withdrawn from him.

God sent a prophet called Ahijah to a man called Jeroboam. Ahijah was wearing a new coat. When the two of them were alone in the open country Ahijah took off his coat and tore it into twelve pieces. He said to

Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for these are ten tribes of Israel, which God will tear from the hand of Solomon, and you shall be king over Israel.

But for the sake of God's promise to David he will leave two tribes for Solomon's sons, to be the kingdom of Judah."

So after Solomon's death the kingdom was divided. Jeroboam was king of Israel, and Rehoboam was king in Judah.

In those days the kings who ruled the two kingdoms did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Covenant, and the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and went after statues of gold and silver and wood, and worshipped them.



The story of Elijah

One day Jeroboam was offering incense before the people to a golden bull-calf at Bethel, the place where once Jacob had seen the ladder to heaven. God was angry, and sent another of the prophets, who were called 'men of God'.

The man of God cursed the altar, but when the King put out his hand as a sign to arrest the prophet his hand was paralysed and the altar fell into ashes. Then Jeroboam was afraid, knowing God's Presence. Through the prophets, God was trying to change the hearts of these kings.

In the reign of the wicked King Ahab, Israel had altogether forgotten Yahweh. So God sent a great prophet called Elijah, and he told the King, "There shall be no dew nor rain in these years." And so there was famine. But God cared for the poor, for they had not sinned, and a story about Elijah shows this: The prophet was sent to the house of a poor widow. All she had to share with him was a handful of flour and a jug of oil, but God made it last until the rain fell again.

Ahab hated the prophet because Elijah always



told him the truth about himself. Elijah was angry with Ahab because the King had married Jezabel, a pagan princess. The Queen persuaded the King and the people of Israel to worship Baal. So when Ahab and Elijah met they spoke angry words to each other.

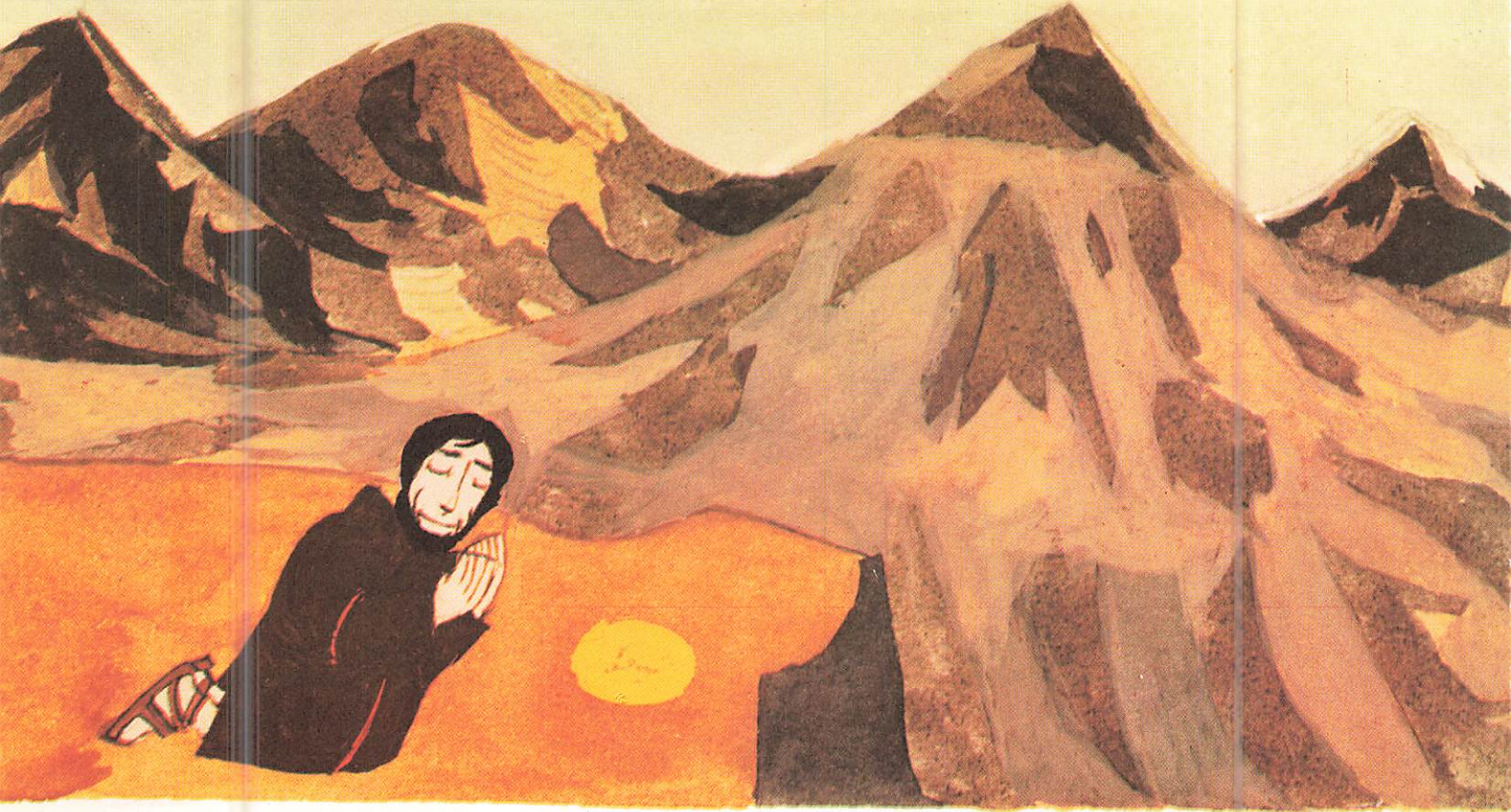
"Is it you, you trouble-maker in Israel?" Ahab said, and Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have forgotten God to follow the Baals."

Elijah called all Israel together at Mount Carmel. "How long will you go limping?" he said. "One step for God, the other for Baal? You must choose." And the people answered not a word. "If Yahweh is God, follow him, but if Baal, follow him," he said, and he decided to make a test.

He summoned all the prophets of Baal and said, "We shall see which is the true God, yours or mine. We will each take a bull and kill it and lay it on the wood, for a sacrifice. I will call on Yahweh and you on Baal. The God who answers with fire from heaven,

he is truly God!" The prophets of Baal had to agree. They prepared the altar and called on their god from morning until noon, crying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry louder, for he is a god who has worries, or is busy, or he is on a journey, or is asleep and must be wakened!" So they yelled until evening, and gashed themselves with knives, but no one answered, no one heeded.

Then Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and made an altar, and put on it the wood and the bull for the sacrifice. Then he poured water over it all three times. At the time of offering he came near and said, "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are the God who changes men's hearts." Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones. When the people saw it they fell on their faces in fear, and they said, "Yahweh is God." Then Elijah killed all the prophets of Baal, there by the brook Kishon.



How God comforted Elijah

Ahab was very angry, and he sent guards to kill Elijah, so he fled into the wilderness.

In the wilderness Elijah felt very discouraged and wished he were dead. But God never forsakes his servants. To show his care, God sent his Messenger while Elijah slept, and when he awoke he found a loaf and some water beside him. And he ate the food and was made strong, because he knew that God was his Father, who would never forsake him. In this strength he travelled on to Mount Horeb, and there God spoke to him as he had once spoken to Moses. God said, "Go back and anoint Jehu to be king over Israel. And you shall anoint a prophet who shall take your place, called Elisha." Elijah obeyed God, and when all his work was done God carried him off to be with his fathers.

Elisha was a great prophet before God. He spoke fearlessly to the king and the people. When they would not listen he did great wonders so that they would know that the power of God was in him.

Josiah

and the book of the Law

One day a man brought Elisha some loaves. There was a crowd of people there, so Elisha said, "Give it to them." But the man said, "What use is this for a hundred men?" But he said, "God says they shall eat, and have some left." So the man gave it to them, and they all ate, and there was some over, as God had said.

Elisha anointed Jehu to be king over Israel, hoping that he would destroy all the idols and false worship. But Jehu did not obey all God's commands. Some of the false gods remained in Israel, and led the people away from God.

Only a severe punishment could teach Israel how her unfaithfulness cut her off from God. The King of Assyria often invaded the land, and he captured Samaria, the capital city

of Israel. The people were taken into captivity in Assyria, and that was the end of the kingdom of Israel, the kingdom of the ten tribes. But the kingdom of Judah lasted a little longer, through the work of a good king called Josiah. He found in the Temple a book of the Law which God had given to his people, and he tried to bring Judah back to the true worship of God.

But the hearts of the people of Judah were not faithful either. Josiah's son turned back to the worship of false gods, and the punishment of God fell on him and on his people. The King of Babylon came and conquered the whole country. He besieged the city of Jerusalem and took it, and carried away all the people of the two tribes into captivity. So the kingdom of Judah was ended.





God's people in captivity

God's people were prisoners. They were in Babylon, in a strange land, far from home. Some of them had to work very hard at digging irrigation canals, all of them were lonely and unhappy. The sad songs they wrote still tell us about their grief :

By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept,
remembering Zion ;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung our harps.
For it was there that
they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.
"Sing to us," they said,
"one of Zion's songs."
How could we sing
the song of the Lord
in a strange land ?

If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither !
Let my tongue
cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
above all my joys !

PSALM 137 (136)

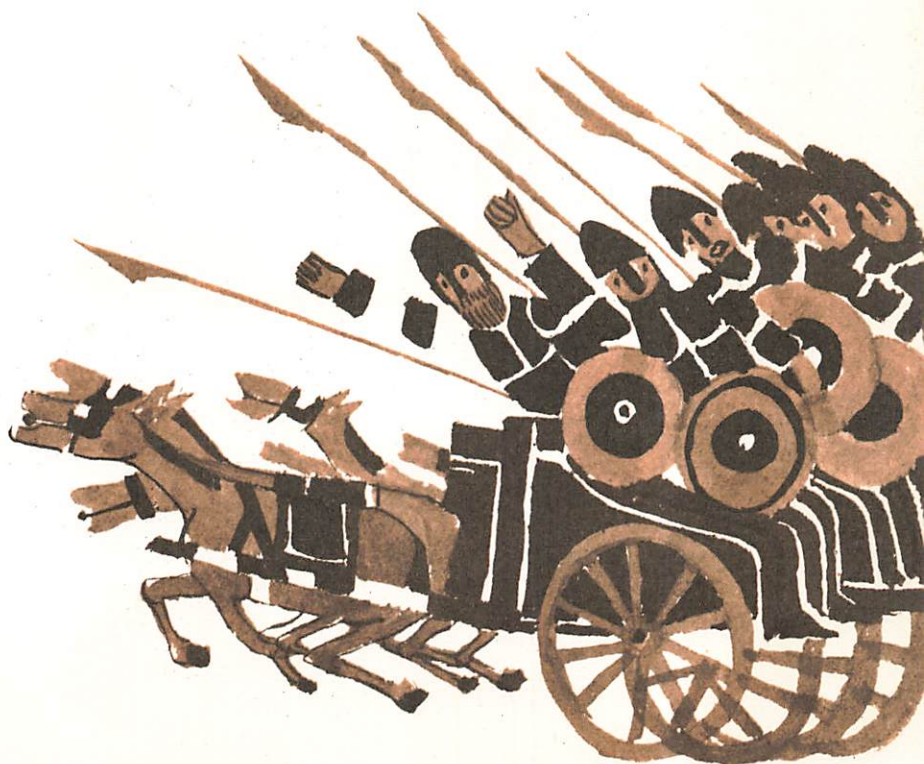
God did not send his people into captivity to destroy them but to make them think. They remembered the words which the prophets had often spoken to the kings of Israel and Judah : "God has chosen your people to hear his word and show it to the nations. You are not to be like the other nations on earth. You are a consecrated people, a nation of priests and not of warriors. Your strength is the strength of your faith. Do not trust in weapons and in chariots of war." As one of the psalms says :

"Some trust in chariots or horses, but we in the name of the Lord."

PSALM 20 (19)

This meant, our strength comes from our prayer, and our faith, not from the might of our armies. When the people had wanted to gain the protection of powerful nations nearby, the prophet Isaiah said to them :

"Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!"



God's poor servants

The captive people in their humiliation remembered all the words of God.

God did not destroy Israel. There were still many living in their own land, and others in the land of exile. But the ones who mattered in God's plan were those who had understood the lesson of their history, who had learned to hope in God only, and to be servants of his Word.

These humble and faithful ones were also called the poor servants.

These poor servants were to save Israel. In spite of their suffering they never lost hope, and God would give them his blessing.





THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

How God spoke to Isaiah

The people of Israel would have learned nothing from the terrible things that happened to them if prophets had not shown them the meaning of it all. Although they had tried several times to do better, the kingdoms of Israel and then of Judah were slowly destroyed. But great prophets like Hosea and Amos were there to show the meaning of these sufferings.

The prophet Isaiah was born about 765 years before Jesus Christ. In the year 740 before Christ he saw a great vision, which he wrote about afterwards. God was calling him.

"In the year that King Uzziah died,
I saw the Lord, Yahweh, sitting upon
a throne,
high and lifted up,
and his train filled the Temple.
Above him stood the Seraphim ;
each had six wings – with two
they covered their faces, and with

two they covered their feet,
and with two they flew.
And one called to another and said :
'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts ;
The whole earth is full of his glory.'
And the foundations of the threshold
shook at the voice of him who called,
and the House was filled with smoke.
And I said, 'Woe is me, for I am lost!
For I am a man of unclean lips,
but I have seen the King,
the Lord of Hosts!'

Then flew one of the Seraphim to me,
having in his hand a burning coal
which he had taken with tongs
from the altar.
And he touched my mouth, and said,
'See, your sin is forgiven!'
And I heard the voice of the Lord
saying, 'Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?'
Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me!'
And he said, 'Go, and speak to
this people!' "



Israel is God's vine

The first thing Isaiah had to do was to show God's unfaithful people why they were being punished. Israel should have borne good fruit like a vine that is well tended, but it gave only sour fruit. This is the song of the vine which the prophet wrote :

The song of the vine

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He dug it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines.

He built a watch tower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it.

And he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard!

What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

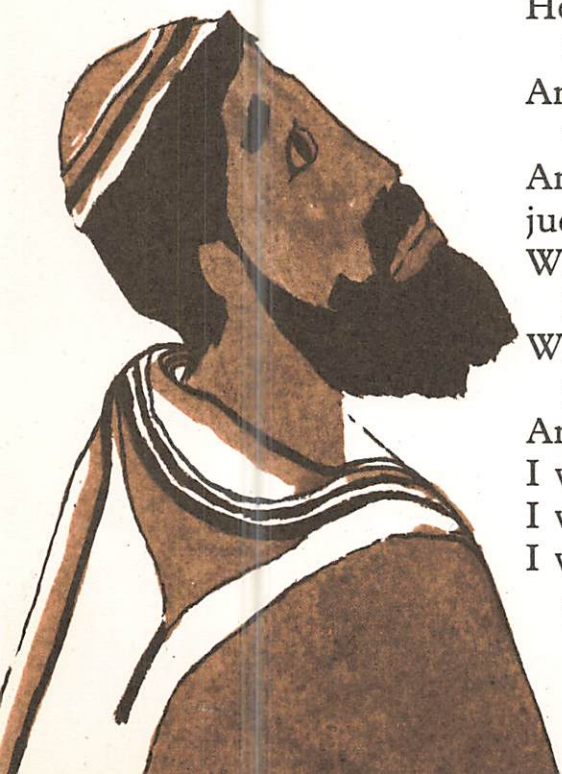
When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge and it shall be devoured ;

I will break down its wall and it shall be trampled down.

I will make it a waste ; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up.





I will also command the clouds, that they rain no rain
upon it.

For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house
of Israel,

And the men of Judah are his pleasant planting.
And he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed!
For righteousness, but behold, a cry!

But later, when Israel had turned to God,
Isaiah continued the song of the vine
differently :

A pleasant vineyard, sing of it!

I, the Lord, am its keeper! Every moment I water it.

Lest anyone harm it I guard it night and day,

I have no wrath, would that I had thorns and briers
to battle!

I would set out against them, I would burn them
up together.

Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them
make peace with me.

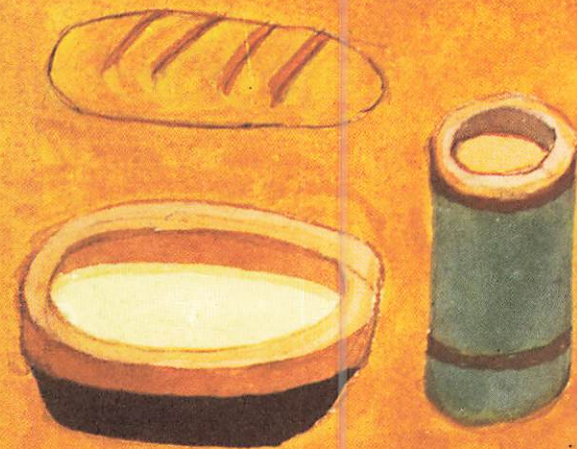
In days to come, Jacob shall take root,

Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots
and fill the whole world with fruit.

God will feed the poor and hungry

In the time of King Ahaz the word of the Lord came to Isaiah the prophet, and he told the people that terrible trials were coming upon Israel and Judah. But to comfort them Isaiah reminded them of God's promise to David, for God would not destroy his people. A mysterious child is to come, a king's son, to claim David's inheritance. He will be the image of the Messiah who is to come. For Israel is like someone who has grown fat on riches. She must learn to be poor. Once more Israel shall eat curds and honey, as she did in the old days, when she was young and newly chosen by Yahweh in the wilderness, when she first learned to return God's faithful love.

"Hear, O house of David! Is it not enough that you weary men, but you must weary God also? The Lord himself will give you a sign! See, a young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel – God with us. He will eat curds and honey, for he will know how to refuse evil and choose good. In that day a man will keep a cow and two sheep, and they shall give so much milk that everyone who is left in the land shall eat curds and honey."



Isaiah foresaw that one day God would save the whole world. He would not forgive Israel only, but all the nations. Isaiah spoke of this time as a great feast that God makes for all peoples. And another time he said that the poor, who had remained faithful to God would have the chief places at the feast.

“On this mountain the Lord of Hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich things, a feast of good wines, of rich meats. And he will destroy on this mountain the mourning veil that covers all the peoples. He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from all faces. It will be said on that day, ‘Look, this is our God! Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters ; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.’ Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen to me, and eat what is good.”





A vision of the new Jerusalem

More than a hundred years after Isaiah was called there arose another great prophet called Jeremiah. He was there when Jerusalem was captured, as he had foretold. The people of the City thought they could not be conquered, because the Temple and its worship protected them. But Jeremiah knew that outward ceremonies are not enough. True love of God comes from the heart, where his Law is written. This is how he warned the proud city :

“Lift up your eyes and see those who
come from the North.
Where is the flock that was given you,
your beautiful flock?
What will you say when they put
rulers over you
whom you yourself have brought
upon you?
If you say in your heart
‘Why have these things come upon
me?’
it is for your great wickedness
that you are to suffer violence.
I will scatter you like chaff,
driven by the wind from the desert.
This is your lot, the reward I have
chosen for you, says the Lord.”

But the prophet knew that God would never forsake Israel. Isaiah had proclaimed the coming of a good king, full of the Spirit of God, of wisdom and understanding, just to the poor and able to bring peace to God's people and to all the earth. Jeremiah talked of this king chosen by God (the Messiah) as the shoot, or branch, because he would begin the new growth of God's people.

"The days are coming when I will make a healthy shoot spring from David. He shall reign on David's throne, and carry out justice and right. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And it will be called, 'the Lord is our righteousness'."

The prophets were sure that one day Jerusalem would be rebuilt. The new Jerusalem, cleansed by her suffering, would be a city of light, worthy of the worship that was offered in her. She would be an image of the heavenly city whose Lord and light is God :

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,

and thick darkness the peoples.

But the Lord will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you.

And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.

A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah,

all those from Sheba shall come, They shall bring gold and frankincense

and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

The sun shall be no more your light by day

nor for brightness shall the moon give you light by night,

but the Lord will be your everlasting light,

and your God will be your glory."





EZEKIEL

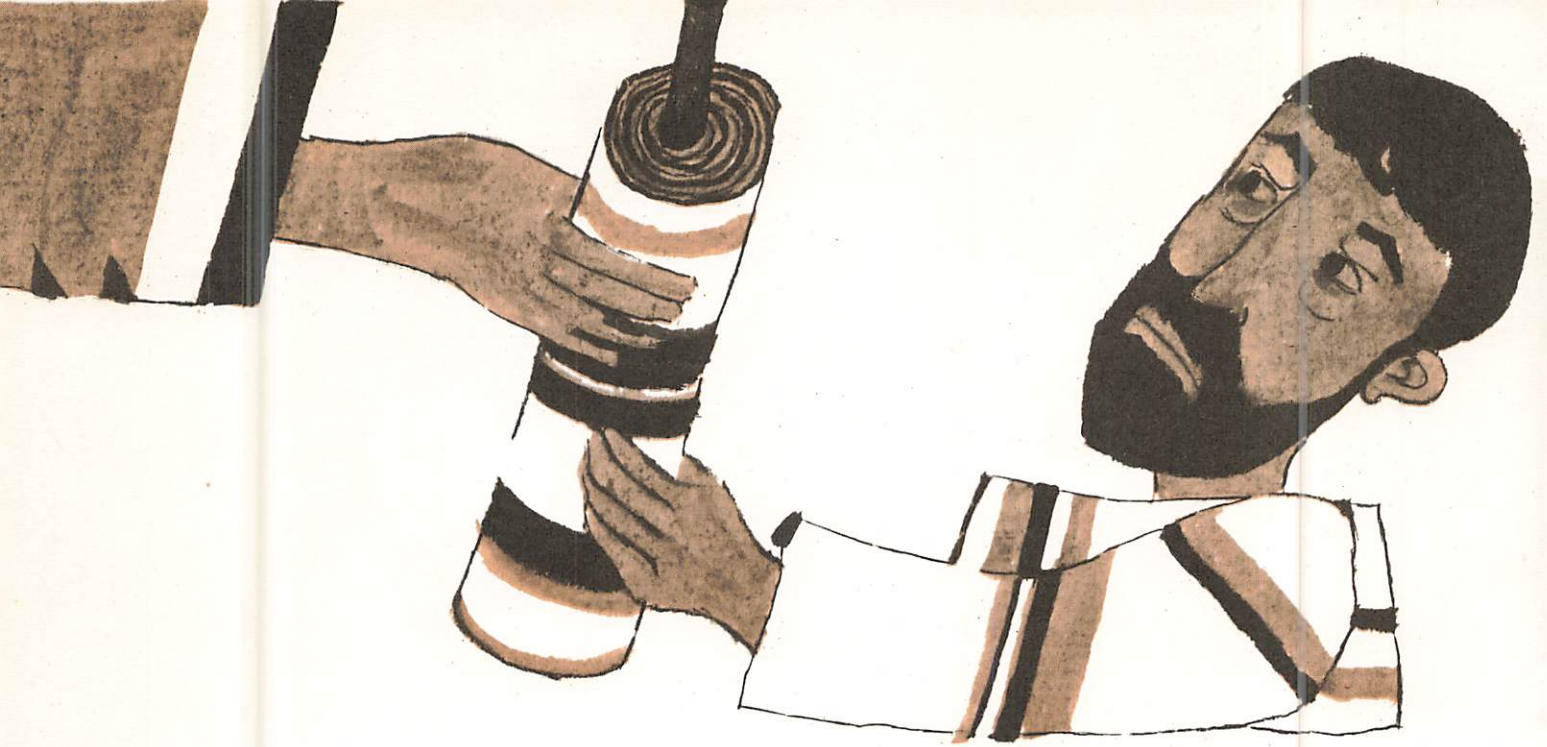
As the prophets had foretold, many of the Hebrew people were prisoners. Their king, Jehoiachin, had already been in exile in Babylon for five years when the word of the Lord came to a priest called Ezekiel.

Ezekiel thought sadly about the sorrows of his people and he knew that God was punishing them for their sins. In spite of all the love which God had shown his people in so many ways, they had forsaken him. Gold and silver had tempted the men with the hope of power and glory, and the women had been proud only of their jewels and ornaments. Many of them had forgotten the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who gave the Law to Moses, and strength to David and

wisdom to Solomon. They could not understand a God who asked only for love in return for his love. It seemed easier to worship idols – gods who dwelt in animals, stars, the earth, the sun, and who asked only a few offerings, a few outward ceremonies. They had forgotten the true God, whose word is love for men.

So Ezekiel sat and thought deeply. He was a priest, and he was to be a prophet. God had told him he was to be a watchman for the house of Israel, to guard it as a shepherd guards his flock. And when God spoke to him he knew that he must give God's warning to the people, so that they would hear his word and turn back to him.





Ezekiel, God's watchman, waited and watched. As he looked a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it and flashing fire. Then he knew that he was in God's Presence.

God showed him great wonders. He saw strange living creatures about God's throne, who were full of the spirit of God and served him. God showed the prophet that he was lord of heaven and earth and ruled in power and in glory.

The vision passed away like a dream, but Ezekiel kept the memory of that great light, and it strengthened and cheered him. He knew that God had chosen him to bring to the people God's word for their forgiveness and comfort, and the promise of a new time of happiness to come.

Once God showed him a scroll on which were written words of lamentation and mourning



and sorrow. God said to him, "Eat this scroll, and fill your stomach with it." In his dream Ezekiel ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey. This dream meant that God would put words about woe and punishment into his heart, but in the end they would show God's love. God's people must understand that God was not just taking vengeance on them, he was a loving father who wanted to cure his children's sickness.

When he thought of how the people had behaved in Jerusalem, the prophet understood God's anger. For centuries Israel's leaders had tried to teach her that God can have no earthly image. The worship of idols led to all kinds of wickedness. Some people thought that idols would help them to make more money, or even help them to murder and steal. Others thought that if only they made offerings to the idols they could behave as they liked. But the true

God of Israel is the God of truth and love. He asks people to turn to him in love, to leave their evil ways and receive his spirit of forgiveness and trust.

But Ezekiel saw that idols were set up everywhere and the people had forgotten God's Law. God would take away his Presence from the Temple in Jerusalem, for it was the sanctuary of a city full of wickedness.

He saw Cherubim, God's Messengers, who carried away the Glory which was the sign of God's Presence from the Temple, the House of God. So the city, soon to be emptied of people by war, had already lost the sign of the Presence which was her glory.

Then Ezekiel knew it was time to carry his baggage out, as a sign that the time of exile had come.

Ezekiel spoke to the people of Israel in pictures they could easily imagine. In his song of the cooking pot the food had to be emptied out so that the rust at the bottom could be burned off. Jerusalem also had to be emptied and cleansed.

The song of the cooking pot

Thus says the Lord Yahweh :

“Set on the pot, set it on,
pour in water also ;
put in it the pieces of flesh,
all the good pieces, the thigh and
the shoulder,
fill it with choice bones.
Take the choicest one of the flock,
pile the logs under it ;
boil its pieces, seethe also its bones
in it.”

Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh :

“Woe to the bloody city, to the pot
whose rust
is in it, and whose rust has not gone
out of it!

Take out of it piece after piece,
without choosing.

Empty out the broth, burn up the
bones.

Then set it empty on the coals, that
it may become

red hot and its dirt will be melted
and its rust burned away.”



Still Ezekiel brooded over Israel's fate. Many of those who had been exiled to Babylon had died on the way, and their bones lay beside the road. But God can make a new people even from skeletons.

"The Spirit of the Lord set me in a plain full of bones," Ezekiel wrote. "And he said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord, you know.' He said to me, 'Prophesy to these dry bones and say, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.' So I prophesied, and there was a rattling, and

the bones came together. And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh, and skin covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said, 'Prophesy to the spirit and say, Come and breathe upon these dead.' And I prophesied, and the breath came upon them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, a very great host.

Then he said to me, 'Son of man, these bones are the house of Israel. Prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord, I will raise you from your graves, O my people. I will put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will put you in your own land once more.'"

And so it was ; in the end the people were set free.





A new Temple for a new people

God showed the prophet a great vision of the new Temple in the new city. To Ezekiel, this city and Temple were the sign of a life made new by the sufferings of exile, and of a true and strong prayer.

This Temple was not to be like the one Solomon had built, said Ezekiel. Great courtyards would surround the sanctuary where God would show himself once more. The Glory of Yahweh that had been carried away on the shoulders of Cherubim when the city was punished would return to the sanctuary, which was called the Holy of Holies.

One more thing Ezekiel saw a stream of water flowing from the right side of the Temple. This strange water did not sink into the ground but swelled and spread through the world. As it filled the seas it made them swarm with fish. Wherever it went everything would live, all kinds of trees would grow, and their leaves would not wither, their fruit would not fail. Their fruit would be good, and their leaves for healing.

This strange vision of the new Temple, the source of life, shows that it is like Paradise, whose rivers watered the world. Paradise will not come back, but the life of grace will come – that is, the love of God which gives life, and is able to make pools of water spring up in the dry land of man's sin.



Have mercy on me, O God, in your kindness,
in your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sins.
My offences truly I know them ;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned ;
what is evil in your sight I have done.
Indeed you love truth in the heart ;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.
O purify me, then I shall be clean ;
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.
A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your Presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.
For in sacrifice I take no delight,
burnt offering from me you would refuse,
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit,
a humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.

PSALM 51 (50)

GOD'S POOR

In the end the teaching of the prophets and Israel's own history taught the chosen people that suffering lovingly accepted could be the way to a new and purer love. The poor in Israel came to mean not just people who lacked earthly riches. The Israelites learned to think of poverty as holy, because these poor could learn to see, in their sufferings and trials, the hand of God purifying them, as gold is purified by melting it down in a fierce fire until it is separated from all that is not the true metal.

Several famous stories give us an idea of God's poor men. There is the story of Job, a good and upright man, who feared God and turned from evil. He had a large family and was rich, he was a man of importance.



One day Satan, the enemy of man, said to God, "Job loves you and serves you because you have made him prosperous and happy. Would he still bless you if you took away his possessions?" So God tested Job. Job lost his wealth, and his children, and he developed a disgusting and painful skin disease, so that he had to live quite alone, for no one would come near him. In his terrible loneliness Job wondered if even God had forsaken him. Once he had felt near to God in prayer, now God seemed to have hidden himself.

"See, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot find him ; on the left hand I seek him but I cannot behold him ; I turn to the right hand, but I cannot see him. But he knows the way that I take ; when he has tried me I shall come forth as gold."

Some friends came to see Job, but they were strange friends, who only wanted to find out what secret sin of Job's had deserved such a punishment. But Job knew that his torment was not a punishment for some sin but a terrible testing which he accepted because his love for God was strong and faithful. He knew he could not understand the whole mystery of suffering but he also knew that God is wiser than men, and can lead them by hidden ways. So at last he said,

"Think of the wonderful works of God, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge!

God is clothed with terrible majesty. The Almighty – we cannot find him, he is great in power and justice, but he will not destroy true righteousness. Therefore men fear him, for he despises the knowledge of men."

The end of the story of Job tells how his wealth was given back to him, but meanwhile he had discovered a new treasure also, a firm hope in God, learned by suffering in humility. These are the true riches of God's poor, whether they have earthly riches or not.



Jeremiah

The prophet Jeremiah is another of those who were poor in spirit. He was ill-treated because he bravely announced a message from God which angered the King, Zedekiah, and the mighty in Israel. The King would have been pleased to hear a prophet who announced a happy future to him, but Jeremiah could only say: "You shall be delivered into the hand of the King of Babylon."

So the King allowed powerful men to put Jeremiah into a muddy cistern, to die of hunger, but he was saved in time by some of the King's servants who pleaded for him. But even while he was in the cistern Jeremiah prayed, like the writer of this lovely psalm.





Rescue me from sinking in the mud,
save me from my foes.

Save me from the waters of the deep
lest the waves overwhelm me.

Do not let the deep engulf me
nor death close its mouth on me.
Lord, answer, for your love is kind
in your compassion, turn towards me.
Do not hide your face from your servant ;
answer quickly for I am in distress.
Come close to my soul and redeem me ;
ransom me, pressed by my foes.

As for me in my poverty and pain,
let your help, O God, lift me up.
I will praise God's name with a song
I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

For the Lord listens to the poor
and does not despise his servants
in their chains.
Let the heavens and the earth give
him praise,
the sea and all its living creatures.



The suffering Servant

Among all these poor men the most wonderful is described by a prophet in the Book of Isaiah. He is called God's Servant, he belongs to the poor in Israel, and he is the greatest of them, for he does not bear his own sin only but also the sin of his forefathers and of all mankind. He is the image of the Messiah, which means the man chosen to bring God's saving power to men.

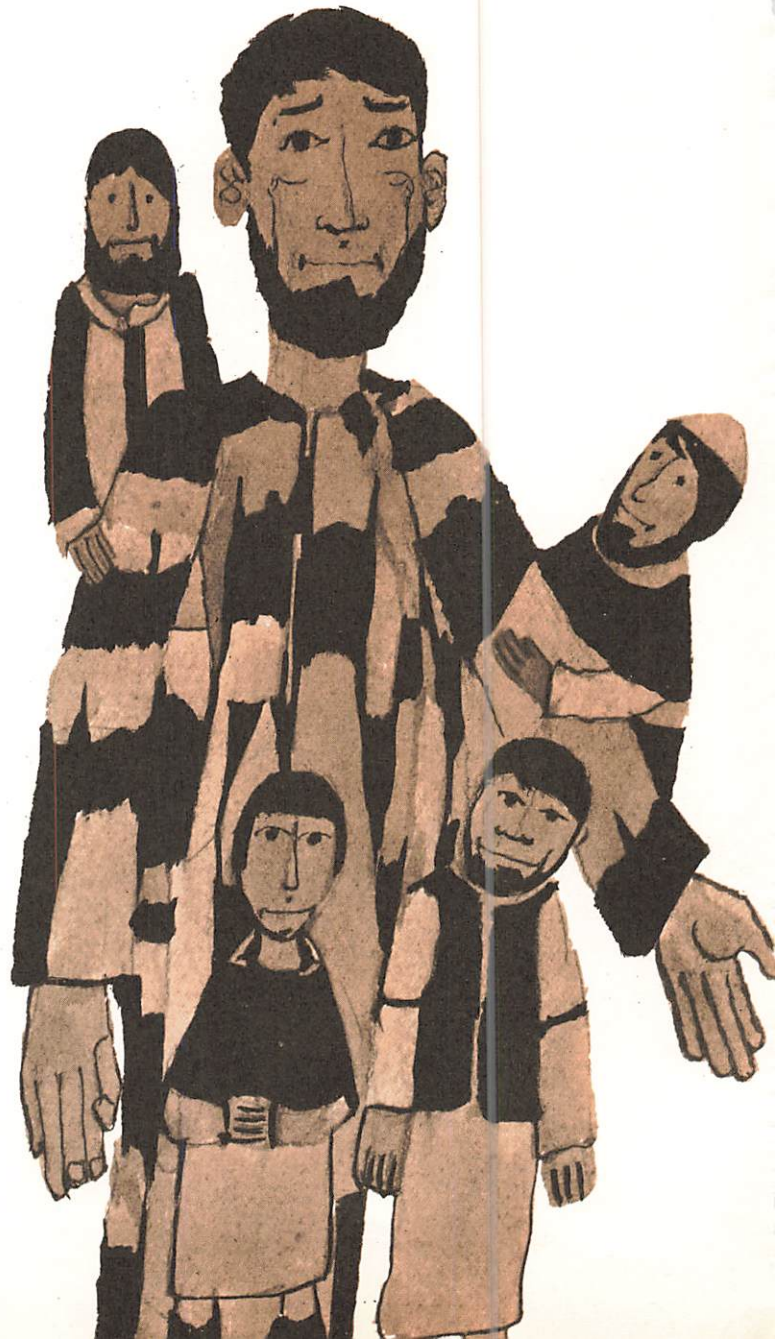
Christians have often thought of this poor, suffering Servant as an image of Christ, because Christ, like him, suffered pain and utter humiliation in his passion and on the cross. The poor man, in God's eyes, is one who is obedient through all his trials, who always does the Father's will. When he is stripped of everything he knows this is his chance to say 'Yes' to God. When Christ came he was obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.

He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,
and as one from whom men hide their faces,
he was despised and we esteemed him not.
Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows ;
yet we esteemed him struck down,
stricken by God and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities ;
upon him was the chastisement that made
us whole,
and with his wounds we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray ;
we have turned every one to his own way ;
and the Lord has laid on him
the wickedness of us all.
He was oppressed and he was afflicted
yet he opened not his mouth ;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers
is dumb,
so he opened not his mouth.
By oppression and judgement he was taken
away ;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the sins of my people ?
And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him.
When he makes himself an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, his days
shall be long ;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
He shall see the reward of his suffering,
and be satisfied.



The sufferings and death of this mysterious Servant will open God's love to men. By this great and patient love God will save the world. He will gather together his scattered people into one flock, he will call together distant nations into one great Assembly, which we call the Church, around the man consecrated by his own death, the Messiah, or Christ, who is to come. Here are the words of the prophet :

“He shall see the reward of his
suffering and be satisfied,
by his knowledge shall the holy one,
my Servant,
make many others holy,
for he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will count all these as
his share,
he will claim a strong man's share
of the spoil.
Because he poured out his soul
to death,
and was numbered with
the disobedient ;
yet he bore the sin of many
and made intercession for the
disobedient.”



THE PSALMS

A SONG OF LONGING FOR GOD

As the deer that yearns
for running streams,
so my soul is yearning
for you, my God.

My soul is thirsting for God,
the God of my life ;
when can I enter and see
the face of God ?

My tears have become my bread,
by night, by day,
as I hear it said all day long :
“Where is your God ?”

These things will I remember
as I pour out my soul :
how I would lead the rejoicing crowd
into the house of God,
amid cries of gladness and
thanksgiving,
the throng wild with joy.

Why are you cast down, my soul,
why groan within me ?
Hope in God ; I will praise him still,
my saviour and my God.

PSALM 42 (41)

From the beginning of their history, the people of Israel praised God and proclaimed their faith in poems and songs. There are a great many of these in the Bible, and they help us to understand the developing faith of God's people. Among them there are hymns that call us to praise God by telling the great deeds of the Lord, in creation and in the history of his chosen people. There are prayers of men struggling with pain, with sorrow, with the humiliation of defeat, and the fear of illness. There are songs of thanksgiving for God's blessings to Israel, and to ordinary men and women. Some of these psalms were written by David, but others were sung by special families of singers. The singing of psalms was accompanied by musical instruments : lyre, drum, zither, pipes, flute, cymbals and many others.



The heavens proclaim the glory of God
and the firmament shows forth the
work of his hands.

Day unto day takes up the story
and night unto night makes known
the message.

No speech, no word, no voice
is heard
yet their message goes forth through
all the earth,
their word to the utmost bounds
of the world.

There he has placed a tent for the sun ;
it comes forth like a bridegroom
coming from his tent,
rejoices like a champion to run
its course.

At the end of the sky is the rising
of the sun ;
to the furthest end of the sky
is its course.

There is nothing concealed from
its burning heat.





The Law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

They are more to be desired than gold
than the purest of gold,
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb.

PSALM 19 (18)

The Lord is my shepherd ;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near quiet waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path ;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of
darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook
and your staff ;
with these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil ;
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall
follow me
all the days of my life ;
in the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

PSALM 23 (22)



A SONG OF CONFIDENCE

I lift up my eyes to the mountains ;
from where shall come my help ?
My help shall come from the Lord
who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble!
Let him sleep not, your guard.
No, he sleeps not nor slumbers,
Israel's guard.

The Lord is your guard and your shade ;
at your right side he stands.
By day the sun shall not smite you
nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard you from evil,
he will guard your soul.
The Lord will guard your going and coming
both now and for ever.

PSALM 121 (120)

THE PRAYER OF A HUMBLE MAN

To you have I lifted up my eyes,
you who dwell in the heavens :
my eyes, like the eyes of slaves
on the hands of their lords.

Like the eyes of a servant
on the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes are on the Lord our God
till he show us his mercy.

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
We are filled with contempt.
Indeed all too full is our soul
with the scorn of the rich,
with the proud man's disdain.

PSALM 123 (122)





A SONG OF WONDER
AT GOD'S GOODNESS

My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion,
who fills your life with good things,
renewing your youth like an eagle's.

The Lord does deeds of justice,
gives judgement for all who are oppressed.
He made known his ways to Moses
and his deeds to Israel's sons.

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy,
his wrath will come to an end ;
he will not be angry for ever.
He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults.

For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins.

As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him ;
for he knows of what we are made,
he remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass ;
he flowers like the flower of the field ;
the wind blows and he is gone
and his place never sees him again.

But the love of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear ;
his justice reaches out to children's children
when they keep his covenant in truth,
when they keep his will in their mind.

The Lord has set his sway in heaven
and his kingdom is ruling over all.
Give thanks to the Lord, all his angels,
mighty in power, fulfilling his word,
who heed the voice of his word.

Give thanks to the Lord, all his hosts,
his servants who do his will.
Give thanks to the Lord, all his works,
in every place where he rules.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord!

A CALL TO CREATION TO PRAISE GOD

Alleluia!

Praise the Lord from the heavens,
praise him in the heights.
Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, shining stars.
Praise him, highest heavens
and the waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord.
He commanded : they were made.
He fixed them for ever,
gave a law which shall not pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
sea creatures and all oceans,
fire and hail, snow and mist,
stormy winds that obey his word ;

all mountains and hills,
all fruit trees and cedars,
beasts, wild and tame,
reptiles and birds on the wing ;

all earth's kings and peoples,
earth's princes and rulers ;
young men and maidens,
old men together with children.

Let them praise the name of the Lord
for he alone is exalted.
The splendour of his name
reaches beyond heaven and earth.

He exalts the strength of his people.
He is the praise of all his saints,
of the sons of Israel,
of the people to whom he comes close.

Alleluia!

PSALM 148





THE OLD COVENANT GIVES WAY TO THE NEW

How Zechariah expected the Messiah

The prophet Zechariah read in the book of Ezekiel. He understood that the time had come to lead God's people back to Israel. Cyrus, King of Persia, had captured Babylon. He allowed the people to go back to their country. The people were now called '*Jews*' because they came from Judah.

The word of the Lord came to Zechariah :

"Thus says the Lord of Hosts :

'I will return to Zion
and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,
and Jerusalem shall be called – the faithful city,
and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts –
the holy mountain.

Old men and old women shall sit in the streets of Jerusalem,
and the city shall be full of boys and girls,
playing in its streets.'

Thus says the Lord of Hosts :

'See, I will save my people from the east and from the west,
I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem
and they shall be my people,
and I will be their God,
in faithfulness and in justice.' "



So Jerusalem was re-built, and the Temple was even more splendid than before. In it the sacrifices were offered with care and great ceremony. But God showed Zechariah that this was not enough. God's people, the Jews, had a message for all nations.

So God said :

"Speak the truth to one another, give true judgements, and love peace. Then peoples shall come from many cities. People will

say, 'Let us go and ask the blessing of the Lord of Hosts' and many shall come to Jerusalem to beg the Lord's blessing. In those days ten men from the nations will take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

But Zechariah also understood that this would happen when God sent his Messenger, the Messiah, which means 'Anointed'. The Messiah would be priest, king and prophet.

He who is to come : Priest, King and Prophet

Now there was a priest in Jerusalem at this time, called Joshua. Zechariah thought of him as a sign of what God's chosen Messenger would be – one who would be a branch from the root which is David's kingly family – priest and king together in the true Temple of which Ezekiel had spoken.

"Take silver and gold and make a crown," he wrote, "and set it on the head of Joshua, the High Priest, and say 'See, this man is called the Branch, for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the Temple of the Lord. He shall have royal honour and sit and rule on his throne.'"

Another prophet, Malachi, also told God's people what kind of Messenger the Lord would send – a priest would bring the people back to God, a king full of the Lord's power, a prophet to teach and rebuke and make holy. But some of the Jews saw their neighbours, who did evil, thriving and happy. Thus they did not want to wait for God's Messenger. "What is the good of keeping his laws, or repenting?" they said. "From now on we will think the proud are blessed. Evildoers are doing well, and when they defy God they are not punished." But Malachi told them that if they obeyed God they would still understand and be rewarded.

"Behold I send my Messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his Temple. The Messenger of the Covenant in whom you delight – see, he is coming, says the Lord of Hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a gold-refiner's furnace, and he will purify the sons of Levi, the priests of Israel, and refine them like gold and silver, so that they can offer true offerings to the Lord.

Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of Hosts."



But in spite of all that the prophets said the Jews still hoped that when the Messiah came he would be a great conqueror, like King David, and drive out their enemies. Still, after all that they had suffered, they had not fully understood what God had been teaching them by their sufferings. Indeed there were still bad priests and false teachers who encouraged the people to believe in worldly victory. Against these evil teachers the word of the Lord again came to Zechariah, calling him to be a shepherd to the people when their own shepherds, the priests, did not care for them. "Thus says the Lord," wrote Zechariah. "Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. Their own shepherds have no mercy on them. Woe to the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock! Let his arm be withered and his eye blinded!"

The remnant of Israel

God's people still suffered, not only from these false shepherds, who taught them to hope only for victory over their enemies, but from the enemies themselves. When the people came back from Babylon their days of glory were over for good. First the Greeks and then the Romans ruled over little Israel, and the Jews began to learn foreign customs and foreign ideas.

But still Israel clung fiercely to her faith, and struggled against these foreign rulers. Once, some brave men, the brothers called Maccabeus, led a revolt, and won, and the Jews always remembered them with pride.

Every year they kept the Feast of the Dedication, remembering how the Temple had been freed and purified.

But in the end the Romans conquered, and the priest rulers of Israel had to obey them. Half-foreign kings like Herod ruled under the Romans.





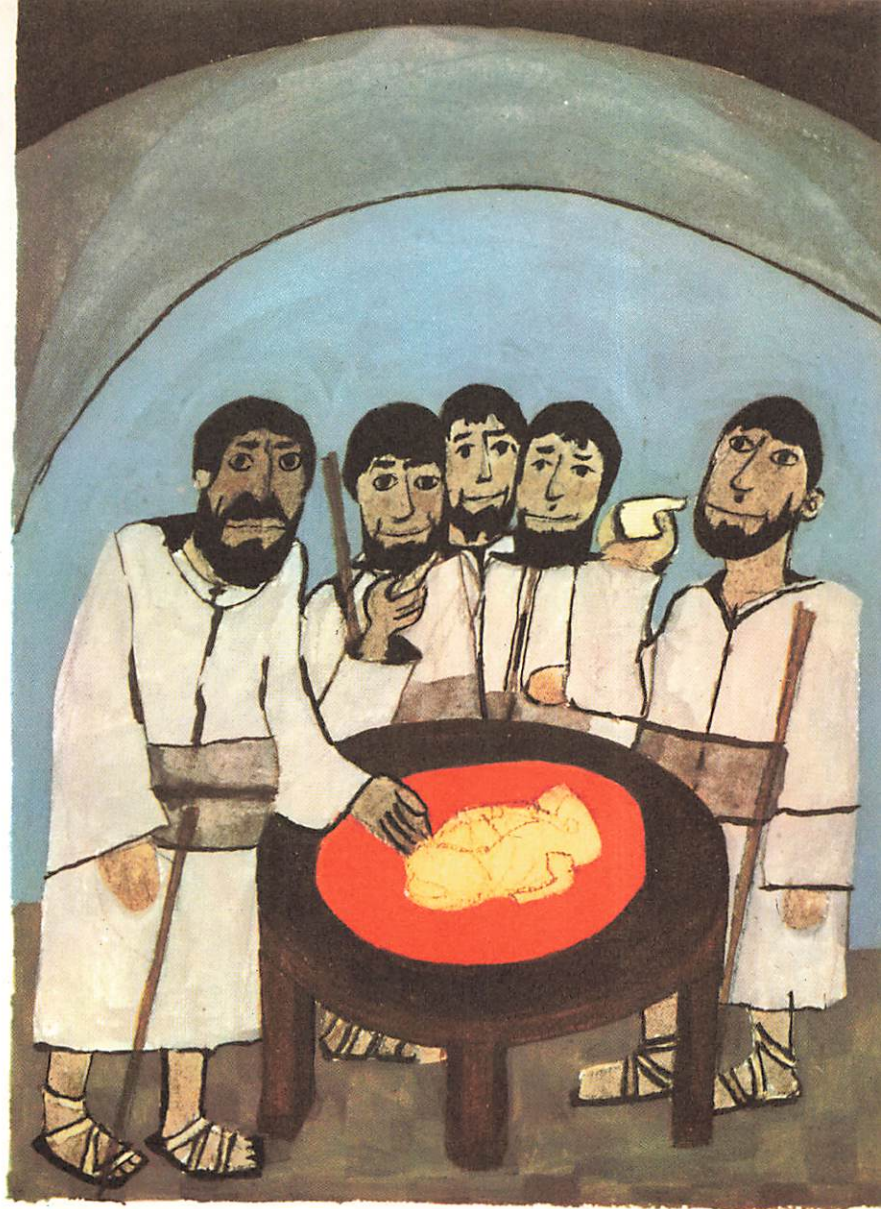
But there were still some who remembered the words of Zechariah :

“In the whole land, says the Lord,
two thirds shall be cut off and perish,
and one third shall be left alive.
I will put this third into the fire,
and test them as gold is tested.
They will call on my name and
I will answer them.
I will say, ‘They are my people,’
and they will say, ‘The Lord is
my God.’ ”

This remnant was those who could truly understand God’s purpose. They would recognize the Messiah. They knew he would not rely on chariots and war-horses, as the kings of old had done, and perished. He would be, as Isaiah had said, a Prince of Peace.

They remembered again Zechariah’s words :
“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter
of Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you ;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on an ass,
on a colt, the foal of an ass.
He shall command peace to the nations.
His dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of
the earth.”

The Lamb of God



At last the time was really coming. Those who prayed and waited most patiently knew it. They gathered in the Temple at Jerusalem, but they knew that all the hundreds of sacrifices, the beautiful chants, the gorgeous ritual, could no longer satisfy men who longed for God.

There were good men, called Pharisees and Sadducees, who thought that the careful study and practice of the Law was all that mattered, but they forgot that the true Law of God is in men's hearts, and they made extra rules that were too hard for ordinary people. The people who loved God most knew that the Law alone could not bring men

to God. Only a shepherd for the people would do this, as Zechariah had said :

“The dreamers tell false dreams,
and give empty consolations.
Therefore the people wander like
sheep.

They are afflicted for want of a
shepherd.”

But the shepherd was coming – a shepherd who was also God's Lamb, like the Lamb offered and eaten at Passover each year, to remind the Jews how the blood of a Lamb had been the sign of their freedom from slavery in Egypt.

When the time came a man was sent from God to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. When he was born his father prophesied and said :

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his
people,
and has raised up a horn of salvation
for us
in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke by his holy prophets
from of old,
that we should be saved from
our enemies,
and from the hand of all who hate us;
to carry out his goodness promised
to our fathers,
and to remember his holy Covenant.
And you, child, shall be called
the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord
to prepare his ways,
when the day shall dawn upon us from
on high,
to give light to those who sit in
darkness and in the shadow of
death,
and to guide our feet into the way
of peace.”



This man was called John the Baptizer. He was the last of the prophets, and he called men to repent, because the Kingdom of God was near. He baptized people in the river Jordan, to show that they wanted to begin a new life.

John was not the Christ. He said "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord!" as Isaiah had said. One day John saw someone called Jesus coming to be baptized, and the Spirit of God showed John that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ. And John cried out,

"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world."

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